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CAMP LIFE OF A VOLUNTEER.

A

CAMPAIGN IN MEXICO,

OR A

GLIMPSE AT LIFE IN CAMP.

BY

"ONE WHO HAS SEEN THE ELEPHANT."

PHILADELPHIA:
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PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

To the interest of a simple personal narrative, this volume adds the value of a faithful description of that part of a soldier's duty in the camp and field, which is necessarily excluded from official accounts or general histories. It attracted in manuscript the attention of the publishers, as a work similar in spirit and purpose to Dana's "Two Years before the Mast," although necessarily less varied in incident, and less comprehensive in information than that very popular production.

The map of the field of Buena Vista by Lieutenant Green, of the 15th infantry, is presented as the most accurate yet published, having been approved by many distinguished officers as a true representation of the ground, and of the relative positions of the corps of the American and Mexican armies, on the day of the battle. A careful examination of the map and references, will afford a clearer idea of the movements of both, and of the progress of the action, than any of the descriptions which have yet appeared.

INCIDENTS

OF A

CAMPAIGN IN MEXICO.

July.—We left the New Albany wharf, July 11th, 1846, at one o'clock A. M., and are now winding our way to New Orleans, on the noble steamer Uncle Sam, *en route* to the wars in Mexico. I am wholly unable to describe my thoughts and emotions, at leaving my native home, with its endearing associations, and embarking upon a venturesome career of fatigue, privation, and danger. I stood upon the hurricane deck, and could see by the moonlight crowds of my fellow townsmen upon the bank, and in the intervals of the cannon's roar, returned their encouraging cheers. As we glided down, the last objects that met my lingering gaze, were the white dresses and floating handkerchiefs of our fair friends. How few of us may return to receive their welcome!

I am becoming more and more impressed with the aristocracy of office. Those who hold commissions have the best pay, the best fare, and all the honor. The private performs the work, endures the privation, and when the toils and sufferings of the campaign are over, forgetfulness folds him gracefully in her capacious mantle. The cabin has been reserved for the staff and commissioned officers, while the non-commissioned and privates enjoy decks the best way they can. I now realize that when one takes up arms voluntarily in defence of his country's institutions, he forfeits his claim to gentility, thereby rendering himself liable to all kinds of cold, cheerless inattention. Under a full appreciation of this fact, one of my companions and myself applied to the Captain of the steamer for a cabin passage. He granted our request, with the Colonel's consent, and by paying extra ten dollars, we were permitted to occupy the

last remaining room, and enjoy the very great privilege of sitting at the same table with our titled superiors.

There are five companies on board, and all appear in good spirits. They are following the bent of their several inclinations. At a table above me is a group of "Greys" busily engaged in signing resolutions indicative of their disapprobation of the course of Gov. Whitcomb and his advisers, in officering and forming our regiments. I will not here try to show how all our plans have been frustrated, nor speak of the many discouraging circumstances under which we go away; suffice to say, I willingly signed the resolutions, which will be sent home for publication. I pause to listen to a song in which Prof. Goff appears to lead.

How pleasing are the impressions made upon the mind by a beautiful landscape, when advantageously seen and properly appreciated. We have just passed three islands lying almost side by side, thereby giving great width to the river. They are indeed beautiful. Viewed in the distance they appear like three huge tufts of grass.

12*th*.—Our noble craft is now ploughing the bosom of the "Great Father of Waters." There is something truly sublime in beholding a mighty river moving on in its course, defying every resistance, and bearing silently on towards the ocean. There is a tiresomeness in the scenery upon the banks of this noble stream, when compared with the diversified character of that found upon either side of the beautiful Ohio.

It is remarked generally by those among us, accustomed to travelling, that a more orderly set of men they have never seen than the volunteers from Indiana. The Greys attract much attention by their jokes and animation. They lead in the dance, and three of their number take the front rank in music. Goff with his guitar, Tuley with his violin, and Matthews with his vocal accompaniments, constitute a musical trio, possessing power to cheer the soldier's saddest hour. I have formed quite an agreeable acquaintance with the clerks of the boat, who manifest much interest in my future welfare. We have just passed the mouth of the Arkansas river, and I do not remember to have seen a single farmhouse for a distance of many miles, that indicates competency or convenience.

17*th*.—After a most delightful trip of five days we arrived at the great City of the South, and are now encamped on the "Battle

Ground" of the memorable 8th of January. We are almost deluged in water and mud, as it has rained almost every day since we left home. Having pitched our tents, several of us not particularly delighted with our new quarters, sought more congenial lodgings in the city, where we have remained ever since, but shall rendezvous and proceed to camp in the morning. In relation to my visit to the city, I shall not particularize except to say, that I delivered a letter of introduction kindly given me by a friend, and was joyfully recognized and received.

18*th*.—In pursuance of appointment, several of us met next morning at the Lower Market, negotiated with some Spaniards to take us in their sail-boat to the encampment, and were soon under way. Having arrived, we were forced to wade from the river to our tents, nearly to the knees in mud and water. We were truly in a sorry plight.

Some of the more enterprising in camp have greatly improved their condition, by laying cordwood in the bottom of their tents. Our condition is rendered more insupportable from the fact that the "Barracks" are so short a distance from us, presenting so much of comfort. We truly envy the regulars.

On the afternoon of the same day we received orders to strike tents and prepare for embarkation, which we joyfully obeyed. About midnight five companies were economically stowed under the hatches of the ship Gov. Davis. Our vessel, together with the Partheon, also containing Indiana troops, was soon towed onward to the Gulf.

19*th*.—We entered the Gulf next morning, and started upon our course with a fair wind, which, however, was of short duration. It soon commenced raining, and while I write, head winds impede our progress. Sea sickness and low spirits prevail. I have not yet been affected by the former, but am by no means realizing the pleasure trip, which some of my friends anticipated. If they could spend a night in the hold of this crowded vessel, they would not dream of citron groves or perfumed bowers.

20*th*.—In view of bettering my condition last night, I sought new lodgings by climbing up under the seat of an inverted yawl, where I slept, or tried to sleep; for the seat was short, narrow and hard,

as my bones can testify. It was also dark and stormy. The wind, rain, thunder, lightning, and creaking of the ship, as she heaved and surged through the billows, filled my mind with fear and anxiety, and kept me the whole night clinging to my narrow perching place. The sky is now clear, and wind fair, and the whole face of nature changed. We are gracefully gliding through the white spray, as it glitters in the sunbeams. The gorgeously tinted clouds are reflected upon the waves, in all the colors of the rainbow. This is the first time I have enjoyed a scene at sea, or fully realized being out sight of land. The undulating motion of the vessel, instead of making me sick, produces real pleasure. How exhilarating to feel ourselves riding up, up, and down, down with such regularity, fanned by the breezes that whistle through the sails!

21*st*.—Last evening was spent in organizing a debating club from the soldier fragments of the Caleopean Society, together with several new members. Grave and powerful speeches were made, and the question "Should the pay of volunteers be increased?" was discussed in a masterly manner. Arguments on both sides were unanswerable, and consequently unanswered. But as the exercises were got up more for amusement than improvement, they closed at an early hour, with a musical finale by the trio performers, who, with the captain of the ship, and others were convened upon the quarter-deck. We then stretched ourselves upon the deck, where we slept undisturbed, save when in the way of the sailors managing the ship.

This morning there appeared to be a general depression of spirits among the Greys. Complaints were heard from many who before had not been known to murmur. Our quarters between decks are truly unenviable, and the heat and stench almost insupportable. We had a fine treat to-day for dinner. The captain of the Greys had the good fortune to capture a young shark. It was very acceptably served up in the form of chowder. The wind is rather more favorable than it has yet been, but our progress is still slow, and it is the general opinion, it will be several days before we arrive at Point Isabel. Another and myself spent a portion of the afternoon upon the quarter deck reading plays from Shakspeare, after which we were all richly entertained in listening to the glowing descriptions of Napoleon and his marshals by Headley.

22*d*.—We have now fair wind, and are making fine speed. This morning the reading party was broken up by the fantastic gambols of a shoal of porpoises. This was quite an incident, and was hailed with much pleasure by the ennui-burdened passengers. At noon we found by the altitude, that we were but six hours sail from Galveston, and but half way to our destination. The captain says if the wind continues favorable, we shall, however, reach there in two days. I have felt gloomy and low spirited all day; owing, I suppose, to our uncomfortable situation.

23*d*.—This has been a miserable day. I do not think I ever spent one more unhappily. In fact, ever since I have been aboard this ship, I have had the blues most supremely. The crowd, the confusion, the dirt, the continual heaving of the vessel, and the dismal wo-begone countenances, of companions, are well calculated to fill the mind with reckless despondency.

24*th*.—We are now lying at anchor five miles from Brazos Santiago. About 8 o'clock, last night we witnessed the affecting sight of a burial at sea. It was indeed a thrilling scene. The moon and stars shone in all their brilliancy, as if indifferent to human woes. The body of the dead wrapped in his blanket—the soldier's winding-sheet—was brought upon deck. A few words of consolation to friends composed the ceremony, and the body was lowered into the quiet deep, food for the "hyenas of the ocean." I never shall forget the foreboding pause of the vessel, or the awful splash of the corse as it fell into its watery grave. With sad emotions awakened in my bosom, I lay down upon the quarter-deck, and was ruminating upon the blighted hopes of this unfortunate youth, when I was aroused by an approaching storm. I sought shelter in the hold, but the crowd, the heat, the stench and the groanings of the sick, rendering it almost insupportable, I soon went aloft, preferring death by drowning to suffocation. The rain had ceased, but having lost my blanket, I was forced to take the wet deck and make the best of it. We shall have to remain on the vessel anchored in the offing, until conveyed ashore by steamers, to procure which the general and staff have just started in a long boat.

It is grateful, under any circumstances, to have friends, but how much additional pleasure it gives to find them among strangers. To find one here and there, who can sympathize with us in misfor-

tune, and feel interested in our welfare, when we least expect it, is calculated to give us better views of humanity. My thoughts were directed to this subject by the kindness of one of the mates of the ship. One day, when I was sitting in a rather musing mood, he introduced himself by familiarly accosting me with "Frank, how goes it?" After some conversation on matters of present interest, he inquired how I came to volunteer. I explained to him some of the causes. Among others I told him the "Spencer Greys" was an independent company formed several years ago, and chiefly composed of young men of New Albany. They had attracted much attention by the splendor of their uniform, their prompt and accurate movements in the drill, and their superior skill in target firing. They had won many prizes from neighboring companies, and thereby gained a celebrity, as possessing all the requisite qualifications to meet the foe, providing courage, that essential quality in a soldier, was not wanting. The call went forth for volunteers, and the inquiry was naturally made, "Where are the Greys?" To say nothing of the many motives that may prompt, pride to sustain the reputation already gained was sufficient for most of us. Our company was filled up, and we reported ourselves in readiness to the governor, and were duly accepted. Here my new friend was called to supper, and upon declining to accompany him, he kindly insisted I should receive a package of finely flavored cigars, upon which I can regale luxuriously.

25*th*.—We are still waiting in the most painful suspense and anxiety, for transportation ashore. For my own part I have made up my mind to bear everything like a philosopher. I entered upon this campaign, expecting to meet with privation and suffering; and judging from the past I am likely to realize my expectations. But trifling officers, and our very unpleasant situation on this filthy ship, are distresses that most of us overlooked in our calculation. Hereafter I am resolved to take everything easy, and complain as little as possible. Surfeited with bacon and hard mouldy bread, and in consideration of the frequent invitations from the mate to eat with him, I went to the steward, and negotiated for one dollar a day to take my meals at the table of the ship. After dinner I was beckoned to the lower cabin by my friend the mate, where he brought forth a rare collation, upon which we feasted like epicures. He opened his chest and showed me many curiosities from China, Java, and other

foreign countries. He also furnished a list of clothing, handkerchiefs, paper, pencils, and lastly his hammock, and begged me to take freely anything that would contribute to my comfort, as it would give him great pleasure to share with me. I declined receiving anything upon the ground that I was well provided, and could not carry his hammock, upon the comforts of which he so fully expatiated. I did, however, accept a superior cedar pencil, and warmly thanked him for his kind offers. He tells me he is a native of Boston, and a brother of Thayres, who is interested in the Boston and Liverpool line of steamers.

26*th.*—We are spending another Lord's day in a heathenish manner. There are very few among us who spend the day differently from other days. We have not yet heard from our officers. Most of us have ceased to make calculations upon the future. How strangely is man subject to fluctuation of feeling!—with what suddenness the mind can fly from pleasure to pain! Last night I realized this in its fullest sense. I was seated astern luxuriating under the influence of a fine cigar, (thanks to my new friend,) and for the first time witnessed a clear sunset at sea. It was one of the most glorious scenes I ever beheld. The whole western sky was illuminated with the most gorgeous colors. The refulgent sun slowly sinking into the liquid blue until nearly immersed, sank at once, and a dark mist shot upward in his pathway to the clouds, which still retained their variegated tints. The whole scene was sublimely beautiful, and filled me with a joyful enthusiasm. The sea breeze, and the graceful rocking of the ship contributed to the effect. At such a moment how sweet is the thought of home, and the pleasures we long to share with loved ones left behind! These alluring reflections led me at length to a vein of melancholy, and produced a complete reaction in my whole feelings, which harmonized well with the changed and threatening aspect of the gathering clouds. We have just been thrown into a state of intense excitement by the arrival of a steamer which has taken three of our companies. The rest will remain till morning.

27*th.*—According to arrangement, the steamer arrived this morning, to transport us to the island. During the bustle of transfer, we were attracted to the stern of the ship, where the sailors had caught a shark, on a hook baited with bacon. Soon a great crowd

was collected, many climbing over the bulwarks and among the rigging to witness the captured fish. He was at length harpooned and shot, but was so large we could not conveniently bring it on board. Just as we were leaving the ship an affray took place between the steward and one of our men, which was soon participated in by the mates, and many of our party. Several blows passed, pistols were presented, and for a time serious consequences were feared, but the trouble was soon settled, when the mate understood the circumstances of the case. It appeared that one of our men and an officer claimed the same piece of ice, each one persisting in having bought it of the steward, to whom it was at last left to decide. He declared in favor of the officer and gave our man the lie, &c. Then came the knocks. But as I said before, everything was soon adjusted, and we separated with perfect good feeling. As we shoved off the mates and crew (steward excepted) leaned over the bulwarks, and gave us three hearty cheers. We landed at Brazos Santiago about noon, having had several hard thumps as we passed the reefs.

28*th*.—Yesterday about dark we pitched our tents, and ate our suppers, after which many of us proceeded to the beach, and enjoyed the luxury of sea-bathing. The convenience here for this refreshing operation cannot be surpassed. We waded out on the reefs and turning our faces to the shore, received the angry surges upon our backs, or facing them again could see one after another coming at regular distances, roaring like a cataract fall, and with foam and spray, dashing onward, like a white plumed army rushing to the charge. In regular succession they swept over our heads. We were all highly delighted with the novelty of the scene, which may be enjoyed, but not described. After rising this morning, the first thing was to repeat the exercises of last night, which greatly refreshed us, and sharpened our appetites for the morning meal. The scorching rays of the sun came down upon us "doubly distilled and highly concentrated;" the effects of which are, however, greatly counteracted by the sea-breeze. The thermometer stood yesterday at 90°.

The island is about 3½ miles wide, and very prolific in oysters, clams, crabs and fish. It may be compared to a sand bar occasionally diversified by little mounds, which are moved about by the storms that visit it. I am told that not long ago several families were destroyed by one of these dreadful tempests. One of our

officers, when walking along the beach the other day, unconsciously trod upon the exposed body of a man partially decayed, that two weeks ago was buried six feet in the sand. I am informed that the 1st Indiana regiment will leave for the Rio Grande in two days. If this be the case, our stay here will not be long. There are about 5000 troops here, most of whom will leave before us. We are in fine health and spirits, and continually congratulating ourselves, upon our escape from the detested ship.

31*st*.—I have spent the last two days in running about, and in writing letters to my friends, one of which I shall here embody in my journal, as it contains all that has transpired since my last date :

" Having already delayed too long, in hopes of sending you some news, I will commence at once, as your facilities for obtaining the truth are not much better than mine. There are so many conflicting rumors continually floating about the camp, and orders arriving daily purporting to be from Gen. Taylor, that we are getting to believe nothing, and to make as few calculations upon the future as possible. I shall therefore send you nothing in the news line that I don't think correct.

" The 1st and 3d Indiana regiments left yesterday for the Rio Grande, the mouth of which is eight miles down the beach. From thence they will be taken by steamboats up the river. We expect to start on to-morrow. Some say we will stop at Barita, and others at the head-quarters opposite Matamoras.

" I am sitting upon the sand and writing this, while some of the boys are cooking, others washing, and some enjoying the luxury of a sea bath, hunting shells, oysters, &c. We would all present a novel appearance, could you see us now. I sometimes almost lose my own identity. The sudden change of occupation and associations affects us all.

" The health of the company is good, and all are making the best of everything. We have but two or three sick, and they are recovering, except one, and he is very low. He has been prevailed upon to accept a discharge, and will return home in the first vessel. He is a good fellow, and all of us regret to part with him.

" General Lane has just returned from an interview with General Taylor, bearing orders for us to leave in the morning. Another election in our regiment for Colonel will take place this evening, and, if possible, I will send you the result.

"The day before yesterday another and myself obtained permission to visit Point Isabel. We accordingly set out early in the morning. After crossing the Brazos in a sail-boat, we first visited the hospital containing the sick and wounded of the 8th and 9th. The rooms were large and airy, and everything characterized by cleanliness and order. It is an affecting sight for an American to behold his countrymen wounded in carrying out the demands of his government, to see them with their legs and arms blown off, rendering them ever afterwards incapable of enjoying active life. I was surprised and delighted with the patience and good humor they exhibited, and with what good feeling the infantry and dragoons joked and rallied each other. The first instance was brought about by my addressing one of them with, 'My friend you do not look much like a wounded man.' Said he, 'I wasn't much hurt, but that man sitting on my right, belongs to May's dragoons, who have so immortalized themselves. He was shot all over with six pounders.' The one pointed out pleasantly rejoined. 'You are jealous because we fought harder than you did.' Then turning to us he continued: 'Yes, the infantry got into a difficulty and cried, "come and help us;" that was enough, so we rode up and saved them; now they envy us our distinction.' 'No we don't,' replied the other, 'no we don't. We know you did all the fighting. Uncle Sam could not get along without you.' 'Do you see,' said the dragoon, still addressing us, 'how they try to take away our laurels? I will not talk with my inferiors. You know our privates rank with their orderly sergeants.'' We then passed on to others, who freely answered all our questions. They are all convalescent with the exception of one prisoner, who was shot in both legs. One leg has been amputated, and it is supposed the other will have to be, and that he will not be able to survive the operation. From here we proceeded to the armory, and were shown some copper balls taken in the late battles. We then visited Major Ringgold's grave. It is enclosed with a wooden fence, the rails of which are filled with holes, so as to admit musket barrels. These form the palings, the bayonets serving as pickets. Two boards painted black serve for tombstones. The newly made graves of volunteers were scattered around, with no names to distinguish them. Thus we realize all their day-dreams of an unfading name. We then retraced our steps towards the quartermaster's depot, stopping at

intervals to speak with the regulars, who were very courteous and patronizing, evidently feeling their superiority.

"At the outer edge of the entrenchments, we passed by a party of Mexicans. We could not but exclaim, 'Are these the people we came to fight against?' You can form no idea of their wretched appearance, without thinking of the most abject poverty and ignorance. They had brought hides to sell, on carts with wooden wheels, drawn by oxen with a straight stick lashed to the horns for a yoke. Having arrived at the quartermaster's, we were shown some pack saddles, and camp equipage taken in the two battles. I never was more disappointed with the appearance of a place than I was with Point Isabel. The government houses are built principally like barns with canvas roofs. There are in the place only three or four old Spanish huts, with thatched roofs; the rest are tents and canvas covered booths. Capt. Bowles has been elected Colonel by about 100 of a majority. We start for the mouth of the Rio Grande to morrow at daylight."

Aug. 1.—As I stated in the foregoing letter, W. A. Bowles of Orange County is now our Colonel elect, Captains Sanderson and Reauseau being the opposing candidates. I shall here refrain from speaking of the present defeat, but I am well assured that Sanderson was honestly elected at New Albany; and yet losing one of the company returns, was enough to break the election, although the clerks were willing to swear that Sanderson had a majority! How we have been gulled and led about by a set of political demagogues, who, regardless of the fearful responsibility, have forced themselves into positions they possess no qualifications to fill, with a hope thereby to promote their future political aggrandizement. O! shame on such patriotism!—According to orders early this morning, we took up the line of march for the mouth of the Rio Grande, stopping only to prepare to wade the lagoon. Having arrived, we pitched our tents to await transportation.

19*th.*—By way of relating what has transpired in the last two weeks, I will copy a letter to two of my relatives, containing most that I would have journalized.

"I received your letter, and under no circumstances could it have been more acceptable. The company left the mouth of the Rio Grande on the 3d inst., except one of the lieutenants and my-

self, who were sent up the day before with eight men, to guard the commissary stores. We arrived at this place, Camp Belknap, fourteen miles below Matamoros, in the night, and remained on duty in the rain and mud with no shelter for twenty-six hours. When the regiment arrived, we exchanged the duty of sentinels for that of pack horses. We carried our baggage and camp equipage, nearly a mile through a swamp, into the chaparel situated on a slight elevation or ridge. It is universally admitted that a chaparel cannot be described. I shall therefore attempt it no further than to give some of the outlines of its character.

"At a short distance it is indeed beautiful, resembling a well cultivated young orchard. Upon a near approach we find the largest trees do not exceed in size the peach or plum tree. These are very crooked and ill-shaped, with pinnate leaves somewhat resembling the locust. They are called musquite trees, and are scattered about at irregular distances. The intervals are filled up with a kind of barren-looking under-growth, which meets the branches of the former. Prongs of this bush, with sharp steel-colored thorns, shoot out in all directions, commencing just above the surface of the ground. The rest of the chaparel is composed of all kinds of weeds, thickly interwoven with briars, and interspersed with large plats of prickly pear and other varieties of the cactus family.

"I am conscious I have not done this subject justice. My powers of description are inadequate, and in order to have a full and clear conception of a chaparel, you must see and feel it too. Two days occupied in clearing it away, preparing for an encampment, will give any one a clear idea of its character. The expression so common with us,

All bushes have thorns
All insects have horns,

is almost true without exception. Even the frogs and grasshoppers are in possession of the last mentioned appendages.

"Our encampment is beautifully situated upon a grassy ridge, bounded in front by the Rio Grande, opposite Barita, and in the rear by a vast plain bedecked with little salt lakes. Now if you think this a romantic spot, or that there is poetry connected with our situation, you need only imagine us trudging through a swamp, lugging our mouldy crackers and fat bacon, (for we are truly living on the fat of the land,) to become convinced that this is not a visionary abode, but stern reality. I have yet encountered but little

else than sloughs, thorns, and the 'rains and storms of heaven,' and consequently have not appreciated the clear nights and bright skies of the 'sunny South.' At present we have finer weather, and it is said the rainy season is nearly over.

"I hope that by speaking freely of things as they are, I am not conveying the idea that I am discontented. Notwithstanding the attractions of home, and the greatness of the contrast when compared with these scenes, I never yet have regretted the step I have taken. We sometimes think it hard to bear with the ignorance and inattention of our field officers. The badly selected ground and our frequent want of full rations may possibly not be attributable to their ignorance and neglect, but they are certainly the ones to whom we look for redress. Other regiments around us better officered, fare very differently. I visited another corps the other day, and to my surprise found that they had for some time been drawing an excellent article of flour, good pickles, and molasses. This was the first time I knew that such things could be obtained, except from the sutlers, who charged seventy-five cents per quart for the last-mentioned article.

"The more I see of our boys the stronger is my impression that a better selection could not have been made. Our messmates are all well chosen, and had we no other difficulties than those incident to a soldier's life, a happier set of fellows could not be found. The plans we form to enliven, not only succeed with ourselves, but attract other companies. Our quarters are frequently sought by them, to listen to our music, and look upon our merry moonlight dances.

"I am sometimes struck with the patience and philosophy exercised, even while performing the humiliating drudgery of the camp. In my own case I do not know whether it is owing to my selection of companions or not, but I have never realized the exhaustion and fatigue a description of our manner of procuring water and provisions would indicate. I have just returned from one of these expeditions, and will here give you a faithful description of the schemes resorted to, in order to lighten our burdens. Another and myself set out with two iron camp-kettles swung upon a tent pole. Walking about half a mile up the ridge, we came to the crossing place—the narrowest place of the slough, which ebbs and flows with the tide. This is unfit to drink on account of possessing the essence of weeds, distilled by the combined action of water and

sun. In this clime he trifles not, but sends his rays down with earnestness and energy. Well, after struggling through the tangled weeds with water nearly to the waist, we in due time arrived at the bank of the river, dipped up our water and sat down to rest. We found but little inconvenience in getting water from the stream, as it was filled to the top of its banks. The country here of late has been almost inundated. The oldest residents say such a flood has not been before for thirty years. If there is fatigue in going with empty buckets, you may readily conceive what is the effect of filled ones returning. The pole was kept continually twisting by the swinging motion of the kettles, it being impossible to keep them steady on account of the irregularities of the road. The difficulties of the journey were greatly augmented by the depth and tenacity of the mud, which kept us plunging about, and to our great consternation, causing us to spill the precious liquid.

"From this description you may think we had a cheerless trip. It was not so. All was characterized by good humor. We started out crying the lead, 'a quarter less twain,' until we exhausted the vein; then turning military, the command was given, 'guide right, cover your file leader, left, left, left,' &c. The novelty of the scenery and *genial influences* of the sun,—for I know of no other cause,—gradually excited our minds as we proceeded through the quiet wave, and inspired us to more noble and exalted demonstrations. Glory became the subject of our song. Touching quotations from the poets, and inflamed, impressive recitations, from ardent, patriotic orators and statesmen, were resorted to, expressive of the high aspirations with which we set out upon this glorious campaign. We then in lower tones spoke of the realization of these day-dreams. With feelings thus awakened we continued our wade. As we approached the land, whether it was owing to a sensitive feeling upon the shoulders, a general physical debility, the interesting associations, or the lulling murmur of the ripples in our wake, I pretend not to say; at any rate 'a change came over the spirit of our dreams.' Our minds reverted to the pleasing recollections of home. The departed shades of good dinners, and clear, cool refreshing drinks, rose before us, seducing our appetites from coarser fare. Thus ended our trip, which, from our own reflections, and the ludicrous contrasts of the present with the past, wound up with the heartiest merriment. Safely landed, we drained our boots and proceeded to tent No. 1.,

where the water was received by our thirsty messmates with countenances expressive of joy and satisfaction.

"The day before yesterday we lost one of our comrades, John Lewis, who died from the effects of measles. Not one, to my knowledge, taken down here with this disease has ever recovered. He was the second in size in the company, and possessed a powerful frame and a strong constitution. We gave him a soldier's burial. We have obtained discharges for all our sick who are dangerously ill. There is but a small chance for recovery here. The disease may be partially overcome, but to regain strength, when but little reduced, is almost impossible. I don't wonder that our hospitals are full when I think of that dreadful slough. For my own part I was never blessed with better health. Ever since we landed at Brazos, I have not in a single instance failed to report myself fit for duty, at roll call every morning. None have escaped better. The boys say I look so much like a Mexican in complexion, you would hardly recognize me. I cannot say much about my face, as I seldom get a sight of it, but my hands look very much the color of a new saddle. You would be surprised to see the bronzing effect of the sun upon our finger nails. This climate suits my constitution admirably, you therefore need give yourselves no uneasiness about my health.

"I do think I never had anything diffuse joy more suddenly through my heart, than did the arrival of your letter. I had just returned from wading the slough, loaded with provisions, as the company was going out on four o'clock drill. I was wet to the waist, and worn out by heat and over exercise. I perceived one of the lieutenants beckoning to me with a paper in his hand. As soon as he attracted my attention, he threw it on the ground, and hastened to join the company, which was marching to the parade ground. I seized it, and without changing my clothes read it over, and over again. It was soon spread among my friends, that I had received a letter, and congratulations from all were showered upon me. I read the expression, 'Home; that word is dearer to you than ever,' which met with a hearty response.

"The camp is continually agitated by rumors brought in by our scouting parties. The other day the regiment was ordered out, our effective force computed, and ammunition distributed, on account of one of these reports.

"You say you often wonder what I am doing. I will give you

our daily order of exercises. We are aroused at daylight by the reveille, and have a company or squad drill for two hours; after which eight men and a sergeant, or corporal, are detailed for guard. Company drill again at four o'clock and regimental at five. The intervals are filled up in getting wood, water and provisions, cooking and washing. Hunting parties go out sometimes and kill fowls, cattle, wolves and snakes. One day last week mess No. 14 served up for dinner a rattlesnake seven feet long. There are many things I should like to write, but having already spun this letter to an outlandish length, I conclude by thanking you for the attention and consolation you have given my dear mother. The affectionate regards of my brothers greatly encourage me. I am writing this lying on the ground, with my paper on my blanket, and with noise and confusion around."

31*st*.—If our spirits are depressed, and loneliness and ennui pervade our feelings, when in good health, how much greater must be the discontent and gloom that weigh upon us when sick? Nothing could be more unenviable than my situation for the last two days. Last Thursday we moved our encampment about a mile further down the river, below the slough, upon the ground formerly occupied by the 2d regiment from Kentucky. The heat, rain, violent exertions and other causes combined, have brought upon me the prevailing disease of the season. I have suffered from accompanying headaches and fever. My condition has been much ameliorated by the kind attentions of officers and men. These examples of generosity are teaching me gratitude, but I place myself under obligation as little as possible.

If any one should wish to fully appreciate home with its endearing associations, let him imagine himself a sick soldier, with his body protected from the ground only by the thickness of his blanket, a coat or knapsack for a pillow, and the hot scorching sun beating through his crowded tent. And in the intervals of a burning fever, should his aching bones find repose in sleep, and in dreams

> "Friends and objects loved
> Before the mind appear,"

yet how fleeting are all earthly joys! The company on the right must be drilled. He dreams again. He meets in fond embrace the object of his purest affections, and is about to snatch a warm kiss

of welcome. That detested drum. Complain not. The sentinels must be relieved. I can write no more now. My head grows dizzy.

September 2d.—Last night the whole encampment was thrown into the most intense excitement, by a row which broke out between two companies of Georgia troops, who were embarking on the steamer Corvette for Camargo. The combatants were principally Irish, and fought with their characteristic determination. Although we were some distance from the river, we could hear distinctly the blows, and demoniacal yells of the rioters, which were truly appalling. The conflict continued for two hours, during which several were killed, and wounded, and quite a number terribly bruised, and others were knocked overboard and perhaps drowned. Colonel Baker, of the 4th Illinois regiment, marched on board with twelve men, and demanded peace. He was himself attacked by four men with bayonets, which he warded off with his scabbard, at the same time defending himself with his sword, from the attack of the Irish captain, and succeeded in disabling him, by thrusting his sword into his mouth, and cutting open the whole side of his cheek. A savage yell was immediately heard from the mob, and the report of a pistol, which was aimed at the brave colonel's head. He fell badly wounded, the ball entering the back of his neck, and coming out of his mouth. Then came the cry, "Help, your colonel is shot,—they have killed Colonel Baker." This was too much, and we made a simultaneous rush for our arms. Colonel Bowles ordered out five companies, the Greys among the number,—and in five minutes we had a line formed around the boat, and the riot quelled, before the Illinois regiment had arrived. The exposure of last night has quite laid me up to-day, although the captain of the guard called me from the ranks, and sent me to my quarters long before morning.

This has been a solemn day. We had two burials, and it is thought Colonel Baker will not recover. The whole day has been occupied in the court martial, which has resulted in sending the officers engaged in the riot, under arrest, to General Taylor, who is now at Camargo.

7th.—I am as well as ever again, and on duty. The regiment has just been mustered by Captain Churchill, for two months' pay.

I have been gloomy and low-spirited all day. When I reflect upon my situation here in contrast with that at home, I can hardly realize that I am the same person. Everything appears like a dream, and I almost believe I am acting a part in which my own character is not represented. I am thrown among the temptations of camp, but do not think the effect will be demoralizing, or its impressions lasting. The more I see of vice and dissipation, the firmer I believe a moral and virtuous life constitutes the only sure guarantee of happiness. If permitted to return home, I shall better appreciate its blessings, be a better friend, a kinder brother and a more dutiful son. The more I know of the world, the higher value I set upon friends. Oh! how sweet to enjoy their society, and feel the capacities of the affections filled with congenial objects! Here I have nothing to love, no one who knows my heart, or understands my feelings. When I recall the impressions of mind under which I volunteered, I have a presentiment that an unhappy fate awaits me. I doubt whether a warm heart or a flowing soul is a source of more pleasure than pain to its possessor. * * * *

14*th*.—Two others and myself have just returned from a visit to Matamoros. Three or four days since we left the camp in company with several of the officers, on board the steamer Whiteville. They were going to draw pay. The captain of the boat was quite disconcerted to see so many of us (nearly twenty in all), coming on board. Having got under way he still insisted he could not accommodate us; that he had no right to stop for us, and that our orders from the quartermaster were nothing to him. After much debate in relation to provisions, starvation, &c., we settled down, and made up our minds for the worst, which was bad enough, to say the least. The boat lay-to at night on account of fog and the serpentine windings of the river. We stopped twice to wood on the way. The ranchos along the banks are principally owned by the rich, who live in the cities. General Arista's crossing was the first place we stopped. There are here about half a dozen thatched huts, and about twenty "peons" employed in cutting wood, and hauling it on carts with wooden wheels. Quite a number of us went ashore and distributed ourselves among them. I went to the farthest hut, where I was greatly amused by the little urchins. They were running around the yard perfectly naked, notwithstanding the rain was pouring down in torrents. I approached the house which contained

one man, two women and three or four children. They all arose, and made the kindest demonstrations for me to enter. I declined, at the same time pointing to my muddy feet. They signified "never mind the mud," and I walked in and seated myself upon a bench. One of the females furnished me with a cushion to sit upon, covered with cloth of their own weaving, which was fringed and ornamented with the brightest and most showy of colors. We could understand each other very well upon some subjects, such as the various articles of clothing, and the prices of the different materials. Everything in the room was of the roughest construction. The fire was placed at one end of the room upon a floor, which was of the most primitive order. An aperture in the roof served for a chimney, which but partially performed the agency. They were destitute of chairs and bedsteads. Hides spread upon the ground constituted their beds, an arrangement admirably adapted to prevent injury upon the heads of children, caused by falling during the dreamy hours of sleep. I was greatly pleased with the two women, and with one especially. She appeared to belong to a higher station. She was apparently about twenty-one, and looked very differently from any of the sex I had yet seen in that region. Her forehead was high and intellectual, her countenance was animated and intelligent. In her ears were large golden pendants, which contrasted strangely with the rude furniture around. Her beautifully delicate hand did honor to the glittering jewels encircling her tapering fingers, which were gracefully entwining the hair of her companion seated by her side. Perhaps my preference for one was induced by the approving glances from her "large, dark, eloquent eyes." She had smoothed for me the cushion, and flattered me with her looks, and I being in a frame of mind rather susceptible to kind attentions, my vanity was very naturally somewhat excited. They were both attired in the simplest manner. A white chemise, and skirt girded around the waist with a yellow silk sash comprised the whole arrangement. Their small beautiful feet were not cramped in stockings or shoes, or their ankles hid with a skirt too long. Their bosoms were not compressed in stays, or mantled in cashmeres, but heaved freely under the healthful influences of the genial sun and balmy air of the sunny south. I approached the mat where they were sitting, and took the hand of a little girl, and touching the shoulders of my favorite, I pointed to the child and asked if it was hers. She shook her head, and looked intelligibly towards her companion. I then

took up the child in my arms and pointed to the "States," as if I would take it home with me. They both snatched the child with great fondness, exclaiming "no, no, no," to the infinite amusement of the men who came around me, making every demonstration of gratification and good will. At this interesting crisis the steamboat bell summoned me, and by running at full speed I arrived just in time, while one of the party less fortunate was left behind. He was greatly frightened, and plead earnestly, but his supplications were in vain. The captain said he could walk across the country, and get to Matamoros before we would. I would almost willingly have exchanged situations with him.

We at length arrived at Matamoros, having been in sight of the town for five hours before we landed. The river is so crooked that there are landings on different sides of the city. We registered our names at the Exchange Hotel. This is a two story brick building with a flat roof, and an open court in the centre. It was formerly the Mexican custom house. Our sleeping room was the one through which two cannon balls had passed, during the bombardment from Fort Brown. The next morning we rose early and visited the market. The building is about twenty-five feet high, supported by columns and arches. The whole interior is divided into stalls, where can be bought meats of all kinds. The outside is reserved for vegetables and varieties, sold from mats spread upon the ground, by women with half-clothed figures, and disheveled hair, presenting an appearance uncouth and repulsive. Bread, milk, pies and hot coffee are sold in large quantities.

I was surprised to find so many Mexicans still residing in the city. And was still more surprised to find the alcalde and police officers performing their respective duties, and all the municipal laws enforced as formerly. The alcalde, however, receives instruction from Colonel Clark.

The dress most common for the women I have already described; I will, however, mention that they never wear bonnets, but throw a scarf ingeniously over the head and shoulders. The young men dress with much taste and neatness, and most of them possess fine figures. They generally appear in white, and instead of suspenders they wear around the waist sashes of various colors. The bottoms of their pants are of enormous width. Some, more showy than the rest, wear blue over the white, with the outer seam left open to the hips, and buttons down the side. The hat, which is made of straw

or wool, and often covered with oil-cloth, has its peculiarities. On each side and about three inches from the top, are fixed little silver knobs in oval plates. The bands are often made of gold or silver. My thoughts and feelings while passing through the streets, were in keeping with the novelty of my situation. Suddenly thrown into a foreign city, where everything presented an appearance so dissimilar to anything I had ever seen, I was constantly surprised into expressions of wonder and curiosity. The side walks are so narrow but two persons can walk abreast. The houses on the principal streets are built generally of brick, with flat roofs, brick floors in the first story, and open court yards in the centre. Those in the less frequented parts of the city, are made of slabs and stakes driven into the ground, the intervals filled with mud and straw, and thatched with palmito.

One of the most distinguishing characteristics of this people is their insatiate thirst for gaming. It amounts almost to monomania. Play seems to be the sole occupation of a large portion in this place. Crowds of both sexes may be seen at almost any time in the streets, and on the banks of the river, betting on their universally favorite game "monte." The hotels, restaurants and coffee-houses are infested with gamblers from all nations. Those boarding at the Exchange follow their respective games, with all the dignity that characterizes the professor of law or medicine. Many of them are very showy in their appearance, courteous in their manner, and agreeable in their intercourse. To the volunteers, they are attentive and obliging, always ready to give them any information or advice, and ever ready to rid them of any extra dimes they may wish to hazard upon their games. It would doubtless surprise any of our good merchants at home, to witness the unceremonious rancheros entering their stores, leading in their favorite mustangs after them,—a general practice here. But it is time I should close this prosy description. It would be an endless task, should I attempt to relate all I saw and heard in the church, in the hospitals, and especially the never-to-be-forgotten incidents on the lower plaza, and at the fandango.

Just before we unexpectedly embarked for the camp, our attention was attracted by music, and a crowd, following a company of rope dancers. We were informed that they came in every Sunday afternoon, and performed at three o'clock. The party consisted of three men and one woman on horseback. They were gaudily

dressed, very much after the manner of our circus riders, but, if possible, more grotesque and showy. The music consisted of a clarinet, a drum and a kind of opheclide painted green and red. The pompous cavalcade, supported by the motley crew of men, women and children, making every gesticulation of delight, presented truly a rich and ludicrous scene. About this time the steamer Corvette rounded to with a load of sick volunteers from Camargo, for the general hospital, and as we expected to leave immediately, we hastened on board.

I never in my life regretted so much to leave any place after so short an acquaintance. I was just becoming familiar with the city, and the next night promised much. That by the way. I went on board without a murmur, and was soon on my way to the camp.

20*th*.—This day has opened upon me fraught with new cares and responsibilities. This is my twenty-first birth-day. My country can now fairly claim my influence in sustaining her laws, and supporting her institutions. When an American youth enters upon the stage of political life, he should endeavor fully to comprehend the genius of its government, and the high and glorious privileges it imparts. His freedom of thought and right of suffrage place him far above, in point of privilege, any other people, and secure to him blessings not enjoyed by any other nation under heaven. In view of the inestimable rights he enjoys, how great are his obligations! How carefully should he endeavor to avoid party influences; and remain firm in noble principles, in spite of the deluding sophistry of heartless demagogues. As he approaches the ballot-box, that sacred guarantee of liberty when unabused, let him pause and reflect whether he is acting from impulse or the dictates of reason. I am now twenty-one! We all look forward with interest to the period! We expect, and we anticipate, and how often, during the flow of buoyant thought, we map out the way to future greatness. My feelings are so fluctuating, my anticipations so frequently unrealized, that no result can be very unexpected. From this candid and free expression of my feelings, I do not wish to convey the idea that I am disposed to find fault with the world, or with the organization of society, but only to indicate more clearly the constitution of my mind with native sources of unhappiness.

In looking back over a few years in which I have mingled some in society, I cannot say I have derived no pleasures from the past,

that I have seen no bright spots, or enjoyed no valued objects. It would be base ingratitude were I to disclaim participation in some delightful scenes where sympathy and affection warmed kindred hearts. Was this more than balanced by painful reaction?

The frequent brooding upon saddening subjects, pride, and, I may add, a sprinkling of patriotism, will, to some extent, account for this day finding me a soldier upon the borders of Mexico. It is time I should leave this subject. I drop it at once to recount some of the events of the day.

Yesterday we were visited by a strong north-wester, so common to the season in this latitude. It blew so hard that the water from the Gulf was driven up into the sloughs, causing a swelling from the little salt lakes of which I have before spoken; but to-day we have a clear sky and a calm breeze. After breakfast this morning, I went to the sutlers, and bought a large box of sardines and some claret, as a little treat for the mess. Our captain and lieutenants were invited to partake, and toasting my birth-day, they all wished me success. I spent the night until tattoo, in writing these random reflections, and in thinking what a contrast the associations of to-day will present, when compared with three preceding anniversaries of my birth-day.

October 5th.—For the last two weeks nothing has transpired worthy of note. The time drags heavily when waiting for orders.—Col. Lane's regiment has moved up to Palo Alto, seven miles from Matamoros. General Lane still drills our regiment, as our colonels are both sick, and one gone home. Yesterday I wrote a letter, and will copy it in part.

"* * * * * It is Sunday evening, and just about the time you are returning from church in the afternoon. I fancy I can see the friends convened in your front room. I often think of your parlor. At this time what a different scene our camp presents from that of the drawing-room! Instead of handling gloves, fans, or parasols, our boys are engaged in brightening their arms and equipments, to surprise the regiment this evening on dress parade. I am sitting in tent No. 1, and writing this epistle upon a box that some of the boys have picked up at the commissary's. While speaking of the mess I will pronounce a short eulogium. It is the only one, with perhaps one exception, that has undergone no changes since we left home. We have had no difficulties, but have

lived together in uninterrupted harmony. We now number six, one of our mess having been discharged. What a place this for the study of human nature! Points of character that at home lie concealed from every one, are here developing every day, and consequently much change of opinion in relation to character. Even one's own self changes views respecting one's self, in regard to the natural disposition, motives, and impulses of action. The more I see of a soldier's life, the stronger is my conviction that there are worse evils to be feared than those of the battle field. A retrograde in morals or a total loss of moral principle, is incalculably worse. Take young men, who, from their position in society at home, are excluded from the haunts of strong temptations and the greater vices, and for the most part you will find them moral from habit, rather than from fixed principles, and a clear discrimination between right and wrong. O! how many such will be wrecked and ruined in this campaign!

"I am daily realizing the force of that old adage, 'we know not what we can do until we try.' If any one had told me only a few months ago, that I could with impunity, sleep upon the ground in the open air, and rise at reveille in the morning, and drill two hours before breakfast, I should certainly have been at a loss to know of what kind of materials he thought I was made. Yet these I do almost every day, and so accustomed am I to a soldier's couch, I seldom think of a softer bed. Then, there is poetry in reposing under the direct gaze of the moon and stars, which, like guardian angels, superintend, while the watchful sentinel guards around. *Apropos:* we do have some of the finest nights you ever witnessed. The moonlight is so clear and bright, we easily see to read by it. And then what a range for the imagination. How plainly do happy meetings, delightful visions of love and sympathy, rise before us. Under such pleasing emotions we sink into the most refreshing slumbers, which are only disturbed by the *musical mosquitoes* or *industrious ants*. I close this epistle. The drum calls to parade."

31*st*.—The only apology I offer for such a distance between dates, is the absence of anything worthy of relation. I have occupied a part of the interim in writing letters, and as they contain the little of incident transpiring, I will copy another in part.

"As a good opportunity presents itself to send you a few lines, I will avail myself of it, although it is very disagreeable to write with

a strong northerly sweeping over, blowing sand and dirt in the eyes, and covering the paper. I received your last letter, and I assure you it gave me great pleasure to hear you were well, and partially resigned to our separation. I waited for it so long, I had become used to disappointment, and thought myself partially hardened and indifferent, but it has awakened anew all my anxieties. How lonely and melancholy it makes me feel to see others around reading epistles from their friends, while I am apparently forgotten and uncared for. Indeed, these reflections are sources of much unhappiness. Do not think from these expressions, that our condition is worse than previously. It is greatly improved since the many unfavorable accounts you have heard from us. There is not now one among us confined to his tent, and everything goes on as well as a soldier could expect. My brothers can form no idea of the encouragement and gratification they afforded me by their assurances of interest and regard. I can conceive of no incentive to action greater than to gain their affection and approbation. Assure them of my kind remembrances. I feel this separation will only tend to bind us closer together, if we are ever permitted to meet again.

"As the armistice has not yet expired, I cannot with certainty inform you of our future movements. If the war continues, we expect to move towards Tampico, where we expect active service, a glorious end or a wreath of laurels. General Patterson deems it no mark of disrespect to the Indiana troops, that they have not been pushed forward, nor will it affect our reputation. Our hospital has recently been greatly enlarged and improved. Our stock of medicines is very low, but fortunately the camp was never in a healthier condition. Cease your care for me and bestow your sympathy upon a needier object. The sick soldier with a hard bed and burning fever, has a stronger claim upon you. Forget him not.

"I commenced this letter intending to send it immediately, but shall not be able to do so for a week or two."

10*th*.—I transcribe here a fragment of a letter to my sister "——. I do think you have used me shamefully, by not noticing one of my letters, and I have a great mind to fill this whole sheet with scoldings. I left home as you know, with but few associates. I have no friends of my own age with you, that I have any claims upon, or from whom I have a right to expect any favors. But from you I expected much, or at least I felt assured you would not forget

me. How much I have been disappointed, you yourself can judge. Your inattention becomes more unpardonable, when I think of the many subjects of interest you have to write about. If you would just give a list of the friends who have called upon you, within the last week, or fill a page with the innocent sayings of the little ones, it would be hailed by me as a God-send in this dreary place. I am beginning to feel quite like an old soldier, and 'forward, march, guide left,' and other phrases of the drill are becoming as familiar as if I had spent years in the service. We have had quite an excitement in relation to moving, for the last two weeks. General Lane has received orders to hold this regiment ready to march at an hour's notice. Ever since he has drilled it twice a day. The Tampico fever and rage for Monterey have abated, but still the general keeps up his two drills a day. The paymaster was here last week, and paid off all save three companies,—ours one of them. The money gave out. The health of the company is better than ever, and we do have some of the greatest jollifications you ever heard of. We get a couple of violins, and do up dancing to their music *à la Mexicana*. You would deem it a rich treat to hear the promptings, and attempts at Spanish, which some of the boys have picked up in the neighborhood, at the various fandangos. We sometimes have half the regiment about our quarters. The captain's marque, like his shop door at home, is the emporium of anecdote and humor.

"15*th*.—Lieutenant Cayce has just arrived from among you, and has enriched us all. How shall I express my gratitude, for the kind favors you have shown me? The shirts from my dear mother came just in time. And although the expression of Falstaff,—'I have but a shirt and half to all my company; and the half shirt is two napkins tacked together,' was not true of us generally, yet I assure you my under 'tunic' answered mighty well to the half shirt. Your letter, and those of other friends are thankfully received. This has been a happy day to us all, notwithstanding the northwester. I now take a hasty leave. The bearer waits for this."

21*st*.—For the last two days we have all been busily engaged in preparing for, and in celebrating the fourth anniversary of the Spencer Greys, which came off yesterday in fine style. Our arms and equipments were all polished and whitened, in the best manner

our limited conveniences would allow. Our fatigue dresses were not so showy as our handsome uniforms at home, yet we made an imposing appearance, and attracted much attention, while performing some maneuvers of the fancy drill, upon our parade ground. One of the paymasters said it was the finest display he had seen on the Rio Grande. I am told that our general, in a burst of admiration, said, "I would rather command a regiment of such boys than be the president." In fact we did ourselves great credit both in the field, and target firing. Above all the rest our beautiful flag was universally admired.

It was a fine day, and everything appeared to good advantage. The sun once more shone forth with all his refulgence, which contrasted happily with the cold and dreary weather of the three or four previous days, during which a strong norther was sweeping over us, blowing down tents and covering everything with sand. But our birth-day anniversary was ushered in with an unclouded sky, and a complete change in the whole face of nature. The whole day proved an auspicious one, as the paymaster arrived and forked over our seven dollars a month. At night music and dancing were the order of exercises until tattoo, after which I took the arm of a messmate and strolled out upon the bank of the river, where we called up to our minds images of the past, spoke of home, and drew many interesting contrasts. The pleasures of memory, how varied they are! How inestimable are the faculties by which we can enjoy again, former pleasures, and happy unions of the past! I sometimes think that pleasures retrospective are purer than those of anticipation or realization. "How grand is the power of thought! My God! how great it is." These reflections and our mutual interchanges of sentiment were at length interrupted by the sound of a guitar, which emanated from the sutler's tent, to which we at once proceeded, and found quite a number of officers, listening to the laudable performances of our musical trio. We remained by invitation, until the party broke up, then returned to our quarters.

"23*d*.—Dear M ———— I have just returned from a visit to Point Isabel after letters. Most of the boys were paid for their pains, except myself. It is an anomaly to me that others around me are continually receiving epistles from their friends, while I am generally doomed to disappointment. The party consisted of five. After walking sixteen miles, we arrived at Brazos Santiago, where

we were struck with the change everything presented. It appeared more like the levee at New Orleans, than the desert island on which we first encamped. The government has about one hundred and fifty teamsters and laborers employed, and whole acres are covered with baggage wagons and army stores. The harbor is filled with hundreds of vessels. Having regaled ourselves with a dish of oysters and clams, we took a boat and sailed to the point. We registered our names at the "Palo Alto House,"—repaired to the post office, and performed various errands for the boys. The next morning we witnessed the thrilling spectacle of the disinterment of the remains of Major Ringgold, for the Baltimore committee. The coffin was escorted to the quartermaster's depot, by a company of regulars. Others formed a procession in the rear, and all marched to the tune of "Adeste Fideles," accompanied by the roaring of one eighteen pounder. Having arrived at the destined place, the body was removed to a leaden coffin. It was so decayed we could form no idea of its form or features. After dinner we returned to the Brazos, and put up at the Greenwood Hotel. During the night there came up a tremendous storm, which swept over the island driving everything before it. It was quite amusing to see the barrels and hats, bounding before the gale. Even part of an old steamboat chimney was started, and rolled before the wind, faster than a horse could gallop, and was thus driven as far as the eye could see on the other side into the gulf. A bet was made upon the comparative speed of the barrel, hat and chimney—the hat won. Having finished our suppers, we repaired to the theatre. The Young Widow and Irish Tutor, composed the exercises of the evening, interspersed with songs and dances. Two or three of the characters were tolerably well sustained, and one of the mess remarked, 'It is as good a theatre as I want to go to.' The storm continued during the performances with redoubled fury, and the tide coming up between us and our lodgings, we were forced to wade it against wind and sand, which lashed our faces unmercifully. The next morning we started for the camp, stopping by the way to pick up shells, which I will send you the first opportunity. The Tampico fever rages higher than ever, and our general is of the impression, we will not be here six days hence. * * * * * Messes No. 1 and 13 have this day united into one. We now think we are the *greatest mess alive.* Every one possesses some peculiarity of taste and dis-

position, that affords fun for the rest. Every meal is attended with the life and jollity of a public dinner." * * * *

"22*d*.—Dear Mother. The letter and clothing you sent me were gratefully received. You can form some idea of my health, when I tell you the shirts would not button at the neck by two inches, nor at the wrist without an effort. In the pants the boys say I look like a 'stuffed paddy.' Nevertheless they all answer the purpose.

This has been quite an eventful day. In consideration of having no extra dinner on the day of our celebration, and this being the birthday of two of our boys, the combined efforts of messes 1 and 13, were brought to bear upon the preparation of a sumptuous dinner for the company. Guests were invited, among whom were many officers of the brigade and regiment. Everything was got up in a style truly rich and rare. Cooking was done in a manner unsurpassable. Roast beef, fish, potatoes, peach pies and pound cake without eggs, constituted the principal dishes. Cigars and claret, were the accompaniments. Managers, cooks and waiters, all performed in their happiest way, in their appropriate departments, and our guests congratulated us upon the entire success of our efforts." * * *

December 5*th*.—We all thought yesterday, that last night would close our stay in camp Belknap, as we had received orders to embark on the first boat, for Camargo, and thence to Monterey. The joyous excitement this news diffused among us, surpasses any description I can give. In our company the whole night was spent in music and dancing. Our musicians acquitted themselves ably. Our captain and others joined in our merriment. I was on duty as corporal of the police, and as the officer of the day only ordered me to suppress all riots, and see that the lights were put out at tattoo, I did not think dancing included, so I joined in the festivities with an ardor that has rendered me to-day almost unable to walk, and my head aches as if it would split. "Those who dance must pay the fiddler." We have just removed to the river, where we will await conveyance.

7*th*.—Night before last seven companies of the regiment embarked for Camargo, leaving the two rifle companies and Spencer Greys for the next boat. We are detained in consequence of the

captain refusing to go on the steamer Enterprise, as it is too small to be safe for three companies. So the Lanesville Legion took our place, it being a smaller company. We expected to start next morning, but have been disappointed.

Last night we were thrown into great excitement by the alarm of an attack from the enemy. Just before dark the general and others thought they heard sounds of a bugle, in the chaparel on the Mexican side of the river, supposing them to proceed from the enemy. In consideration of our exposed position,—there being only one hundred and fifty of us, with but little ammunition, it was thought prudent to station a picket around the camp. The three companies were ordered out, and four cartridges apiece distributed, then marched up to be reviewed by the general. He told us what he had heard, and other causes which made our position a dangerous one. He urged the necessity of watchfulness, saying that we would never have so good an opportunity of showing what we were made of. Many other things he said, calculated to excite our attention, then dismissed us charging us to lay near our arms, and not be taken by surprise. We returned to our tents, and arranged everything, and lying as directed upon our arms, we made up our minds to do our best, if we were disturbed before morning. About two hours after midnight, we were suddenly arroused by a discharge of musketry from our outpost, and the cry, "to arms, to arms." In ten minutes the whole three companies were at the general's quarters.

I think I know now the feeling one experiences while going into battle. My emotions this night I never shall forget. When first aroused I seized my musket and equipments, and rushed from the tent in the greatest excitement. The firing from the pickets, the universal rushing, hurry and confusion, the impatient cries of, "make haste, men; fall in," etc., made me so nervous that doubtless for a few minutes, my words were unintelligible. After a short period of agitation everything was ready. As we were marching out to take our position, it seemed that this would be a wonderful night in my earthly career, and my fate was to be decided by my success in the coming conflict. I said within, be calm and do your duty. I aroused all my energy and decision of character. I then moved with an unwavering step, and would have given all my possessions to come in contact with the foe. Our men never marched better, dressing to the guide as it was shifted, with as much calmness as when on ordinary drill.

Having formed our line in front of a dense chaparel, a party was sent out to reconnoitre. Here I had a presentiment that the enemy would not meet us; that this was not the night for our military laurels to be secured. Had we met the enemy in the field of battle; had we gained victory amidst adverse circumstances, how gratifying to ambitious desire that friends should read eloquent descriptions of our deeds of chivalry. Great was our anxiety while waiting for the return of the detachment.

At length the party came; they reported to the general; the general addressed us in complimentary terms, expressing his unlimited confidence in our fidelity and courage. He dismissed us saying our only enemies here, the wolves, had retired to the chaparel. We returned to our tents crest-fallen, very few having a disposition to joke or laugh over this evening's adventure.

10*th*.—At last we have departed from camp Belknap. The place that a few months ago contained 8000 souls, is now without an inhabitant. I left this beautiful spot with mingled emotions of pain and pleasure. Here we had light duties, we had opportunities to hear from home, and other sources of comfort. On these accounts I confess I left camp Belknap with regret. But on the other hand it could be no longer said, they still remain away from active duties and scenes of glory. I thought of the upper camp and wonders in other lands. On these accounts I left our old encampment with feelings of delight.

We transported ourselves, our camps and equipments to the river bank; but how heavily many an hour passed away before the arrival of a steamboat. We several times laid in provisions and cooked them for the trip, and several times we eat up our provisions before we started on our trip. It is said man is a poor economist in domestic matters, and indeed our conduct on this occasion seemed to prove it.

Well, at last we are on board the steamboat Whiteville, the same upon which many of us went some time ago to Matamoros. Before its arrival the three captains drew lots for choice of quarters. Our captain was successful, and he selected the boiler deck. But the captain of the steamboat refused to let us occupy the place specified. His plea was "'Tis unsafe, the boat rolls so." Accordingly all three companies were stowed away amidst the filth, noise and confusion of the engine room. O! 'tis revolting to the feelings of one

accustomed to the decency and luxuries of civilized life, to be herded together like cattle in some dirty little enclosure, and there treated with the hauteur and chilling neglect of the most abject slaves. How the hot blood mantles my cheek when I look at our situation. "The boat rolls so!" A fine excuse truly! Other boats of no greater strength carry troops upon the boiler deck; yet *this* hireling says, *we* "have no more right there than his *firemen*." Behold the sacrifices of the soldier! He forfeits his self-respect, his sense of right and wrong, his liberty of speech, his freedom of action, and his rank in society. All this for the public good, and what is his reward? Why, *one* ration a day, and *seven* dollars a month, the cold indifference of the hireling citizen, and of the avaricious or ambitious officer, holding in his hand the regulations of the Army. How many such officers when at home, in newspaper articles or public orations, give vent to fires of eloquence and of patriotism. They would shed the *last* drop of blood for their *dear* country! but they seem mighty unwilling to shed the *first* drop, or why don't they shed a little reflection for the comfort of the poor soldier, or why don't they shed out some of their big salaries for the advantage of those who have left firesides and friends for their *dear* country?

So far as this government boat was concerned, it had this regulation: "No *private* shall enter the cabin, or be permitted to sit at the table," the money or intrinsic worth of the soldier notwithstanding. Well, I have this consolation, that I have endeavored to show proper respect without *truckling* to office or power. In my intercourse and associations with officers, I have kept up appearances without blushing, at the inferiority of my living to theirs. As to the monthly pay of the volunteer, one of my messmates well expressed himself. "I hope Congress may not increase our pay to ten dollars, for I never can be paid with money for the wounds my pride has received."

By the above remarks let it be understood that I am not finding fault with the duties of the soldier. I am willing, God knows I am willing, to do everything in my line of duty. Nor am I opposing rigid discipline, for I hold that subordination is the life and safeguard of the army. Yet the soldier has rights that should be protected, and feelings that should be respected.

11*th*.—We arrived at Matamoros this morning, before day. At

sunrise, several of us went up to the city, but saw nothing worthy of notice. On my return, I stopped at the camp of the 4th Regt. Illinois Volunteers. There I heard with surprise, that my old friend Sergt. R. C. had been discharged on account of consumption. His brother sergeant of the same company had died just before at Camargo.

About noon we shoved out and continued our serpentine windings. Soon after starting several of us took seats upon the boiler deck, determining not to be removed, when the captain approached and tapping me on the shoulder, beckoned me to one side. He pointed below to a wretched specimen of humanity, and remarked with energy, "Look there, sir! look there! Would you have me take such men as that into my cabin?" I replied, "must we all suffer from the imprudence of one man?" "That's it! That's it!" said he, laying his hand on my shoulder. "How can I distinguish? A whole regiment may suffer from the bad conduct of five or six men, and one may injure the reputation of a company." "But," said I, "if you had complied with the arrangements made, you would have run no such risks, nor brought down the indignation of us all. The Spencer Greys, sir, are gentlemen, and know how to behave themselves; but you say we have no more right here than your firemen. I tell you, sir, that if because we are volunteers, we have forfeited in your estimation all title to respectability, it argues that you have but little sympathy for us or the cause in which we are engaged." I was much surprised to see the calmness with which he took this harangue, for it was delivered with much excitement. He at once attempted to defend himself, denying some things and explaining others, but his efforts were unavailing, for the narrowness of soul was still apparent. Here others joined us and took part in the conversation, when I soon after made excuse and left.

About sundown we laid up for the night just above St. Marie. This little town is composed of several thatched huts, a neat little white brick house, and a large cotton press. I thought this could not be the enterprise of the natives, and sure enough, we found that the buildings were owned by a gentleman from New Orleans. I inquired his name, but have forgotten it. He sends his cotton into the interior to market.

What fortunes might be made here in the cultivation of cotton. As we ascend the river whole acres of cotton may be seen uncultivated and going to waste. Occasionally a few of the indolent na-

tives may be seen picking a little for their own use, and leaving the rest to rot upon the ground.

The country now begins to assume a more favorable appearance. The river banks are higher, and the lands back not so subject to inundation. I have not seen any hills, or even more gentle undulations since we started.

13*th*.—Yesterday and to-day the time has glided away more pleasantly than usual. Our officers called a meeting, and decided that we *should* occupy the boiler deck, and at night have as much of the social hall and cabin floor as is necessary to lie down.

During the afternoon, in conversation with the captain of the boat, he spoke at length of the Mexican character, and gave me much information respecting the natural resources of the country. The conversation turned upon the war and its effects. Major Ringgold and Colonel Watson were spoken of. The captain appeared to have been acquainted with them both.

At night we laid up as usual, when nine of us set out in search of a "fandango," which we heard of in the neighborhood. After wandering an hour we found that we had taken a wrong direction, and commenced retracing our steps, when we were alarmed by the most unearthly yells apparently approaching us. The sounds proceeded from a party of young men mounted upon "mustangs," on their way to the fandango. We stopped them and conversed some time by signs, and made known our wishes to accompany them. They now started ahead signifying to us to follow after, which we did, imitating their yell of "uh! ah! whoop! and extravagant gesticulations. Soon they galloped off on their ponies beyond our hearing.

Nothwithstanding the discouragement, we resolved to proceed. The night was dark, and the chaparel was gloomy through which was our pathway. At a rancho we procured a guide, who moved reluctantly till we gave him a dollar. This made him bound ahead yelling like a madman. Now in the broad road, now in a circuitous path, through weeds and briars we followed on and on, until the guide paused and appeared bewildered. Had it not been for our resolution to attain our object, we should have turned back. The Mexican gaining confidence, so did we and on we went. Soon we came to another rancho, where we were beset by myriads of dogs, but like their owners they soon retreated before our charge. At length

we arrived at our destination, where we were received with great courtesy by the men, but with fear and trembling by the women. They had evidently seen but little of the Americans, and doubtless our being soldiers increased their timidity. It was some time before they ventured to look upon our countenances, or enter into the dance with us without considerable reluctance. But our kindness and liberality soon gained their confidence, for after each set we escorted our partners to the table, where were sold cakes, hot coffee and cigarritas. Everything was in the open air. A large circle was formed with benches, and the dancing went on in the centre. The whole was dimly lighted by lanterns of oiled paper.

Both sexes were dressed principally in white. Uncleanness in dress, is not one of the faults of the Mexicans, when we take in consideration their mode of washing. Without tub, without washboard, they rub their clothes on a smooth board, laid horizontally upon the ground beside the stream. Occasionally they take up water in the hand and splash the garment. Much might be said about the events of this night, but this book is filling up too fast already. I know not when I shall get another. Before we started we took leave by shaking hands with them all. It was quite interesting employment to pass down a line of thirty girls, squeezing their little hands. They certainly can say "Adios Señor," with a smile and "naiveté" almost irresistible. We arrived at the boat precisely at twelve o'clock. To my surprise I found it was my night for guard, but it was not too late to perform my duties.

14*th*.—Yesterday we passed Reynosa, but the boat not landing we saw very little of the place.

This morning we got aground, where we were until evening. The Corvette, coming down, generously stopped and pulled us off, after breaking three large cables.

18*th*.—Well, here we are at last, opposite Camargo on the banks of the San Juan. Through great patience and tribulation, we have at length encamped on the most disagreeable spot that might fall to the lot of a soldier. The sand ankle deep and kept in continual motion by the wind and constant traveling. It reminds one of the simoom on the desert of Sahara. Twice to day I went to Camargo. First as bearer of an order for new canteens and haversacks; and secondly, for wild mules to be broken for baggage wagons. We

only succeeded in getting five, but must draw the rest in the morning.

Before I returned to the camp, I attended the funeral of an old Mexican lady, which to an American was a great curiosity. The procession followed the priest to the house of the deceased. He was attended by three little boys with long cylindrical poles of brass. The one in the centre bearing the representation of our Saviour's crucifixion; the other two bore long wax candles. They were dressed in long frocks of red flannel, and something like white waistcoats, which were intended, perhaps, to represent wings. On the sides of the priest were two other boys, with a silver censer and a kind of pot with water and sprinkler. The shoulders of the priest were covered with a velvet mantle, richly ornamented with silver. Each one in the procession carried a long candle with a black ribbon in the middle. After remaining half an hour in the house, they proceeded with the corpse to the church, accompanied with singing and music from the flute and violin. The lid of the coffin was carried at one side, leaving the body exposed all the way. On the black covering of the lid, was a cross formed with white tape.

In the church the coffin was placed upon a table covered with black velvet trimmed with silver lace, and a large silver candlestick at each corner. Immediately in front of this was another table decorated in a similar manner with lace, and having candlesticks. On this were skulls and bones lying. The room was handsomely furnished with images of Christ, the Virgin, and many of the saints. After lighting the candles they began chanting the service, accompanied by the flute and violin, which composed the exercises, and lasted more than an hour. The music ceased only while the priest sprinkled the corpse and moved over it the incense. They repaired at length to the grave-yard, still chanting and playing, while the chimes tolled their deep melancholy tones. At the grave what a sight to behold! The ground was strewed with skull bones and partly decayed remains of humanity. Every new grave they dig they disinter a body, though it is not necessary, to make room for another coffin.

After a short ceremony the priest retired, followed by the boys. The coffin was filled with dirt, each one putting in some, and the lid was then nailed on and lowered into the shallow grave. When

covered over, the soil was beat down with a large stone, and left level with the surface.

As we came back we met another funeral escort, but unlike the first. The body was uncoffined, unshrouded, and unattended by the pomp of ceremony, or the lamentation of friends. The dead man was guilty of poverty. But the *last* may be *first*.

Having returned to our camp we all entered upon the culinary preparation of four days' provisions. To-morrow we shall, if ready, start for Monterey. If ready, I said ; the mules must be shod, and broken in time for the harness. The right wing may leave us, which we all hope will not be the case.

The reported deaths to-day of Mexicans in Camargo, was thirteen, mostly from measles. No wonder this disease is so fatal with Mexican treatment. When the malady is fairly broken out, they apply cold water and drive it in, and the consequence is, the patient is driven into the eternal world. I should like to speak of many more things which I have seen to-day, but the lateness of the hour, and my weariness will prevent it. I am now afflicted with the first cold since I left home. Two items more shall be mentioned. Another was received this evening into the mess; and it is said the needle-eyed soul of the Whiteville has been discharged from the captaincy for dissipation, and inattention to duty.

19*th*.—Pursuant to arrangement, we set out to-day for Monterey. We were awakened before daylight, but we did not start before noon. Many of us have been in Camargo to-day, to obtain five more mules, and exchange flour for bread. Our haversacks are stored with four days' provisions. Here is a list of eatables; 1st, bread; 2d, boiled pickled pork; 3d, coffee; 4th, salt. Soon we shall realize the fatigues and trials of a wearisome march. For my future perusal I shall give a minute description of the sufferings and incidents of our tedious journey.

The road to-day was ankle deep in dust all the way, which nearly suffocated us. It arose so thick at times, that we could not see the company in front. We, however, kept up our spirits to the highest pitch. Bursts of merriment followed the glances and expressions of all. We were truly an antiquated looking group, with our locks and hair covered faces whitened with the dust.

About sundown we arrived at our first encampment, having traveled nine miles. The 1st regiment of Indiana had started in the

morning, and had already pitched their tents. The 3d regiment had gone ahead. I feel very tired with sore feet and aching bones. A cup of coffee has helped me somewhat.

20*th*.—This morning I arose greatly refreshed, and ready to march twenty miles, the reported distance to Mier; but before night I felt very differently, and every step was exceedingly painful. My feet were badly blistered, and every sudden movement of my arms, was like the piercing of sharp instruments. These acute pains were occasioned by the straps and weight of my knapsack, which contained all I possessed. Fancy to yourself the burden I was bound to support. The cartridge box with forty rounds of ounce ball cartridges, bayonet scabbard and belts, the haversack of provisions, canteen with water, musket and knapsack. Let the stoutest carry such loads twenty miles through dust and hot sunshine, and I assure you they will gladly stop for the night. The straps of my knapsack bound me so tight, that I could scarcely breathe. The pain at times was so excessive that I became bewildered, and all things seemed to swim around me. But pride forbade complaint and I jogged on; while others, apparently hardier than myself, gave out, and had their burdens lightened. It was dark when we pitched our tents in sight of Mier. After much seeking, sufficient wood was obtained to boil our coffee, and give light for the writing of these notes.

21*st*.—In the morning I felt greatly invigorated. I was quite disappointed in not getting a better view of Mier, a place that will long be remembered, in consequence of the awful tragedy which was acted there. Last night too much worn out to visit it, and this morning took unexpectedly a rout that did not pass through its streets. Oh! the sufferings of the twenty-first. The sun shone with the power of July, and the dust how annoying! My nose so sore with blowing that I dare not touch it; and my lips so blistered that I cannot tell when they are closed. The heat, dust and salt pork made us so thirsty, and how we did suffer for want of water! So great was our thirst, that we drank largely of a pond covered thick with a green scum.

Having trudged nineteen miles we arrived at Cannales' Run, where we encamped for the night. Nearly overcome with the march, feet exceedingly sore, and so scalded with sweat, that they

did not look like flesh and blood. But bathing them in cold water made them much better. After being seated a few minutes I was so sore and stiff, that it required almost a superhuman effort to move. But I kept up appearances, and did not acknowledge the extent of my fatigue. I had resolved to fulfil the prediction—"I can stand the march!" Great praise is bestowed upon us by the trains, saying we are the strongest regiment in the field.

22*d*.—What an astonishing effect is produced by a few hours' sleep. Last night I stretched my aching, stiffened limbs upon the ground, and how refreshed this morning and ready to march twelve or fifteen miles to Point Aguda. My feet are becoming hardened, but after stopping it is some time before I can walk without great pain; but a little marching prepares me for jogging on better than ever. The march of the twenty-second would have been much easier had we not lacked bread. Just think, half a baker's loaf at breakfast for eleven men, and no more till we stopped at night.

Here we had a pleasant camp beside a clear running brook, and near a beautiful cascade, constructed of stone and cement, in order to turn the channel through the town. How pitiable is the indolence of the natives. Such natural advantages are neglected. What a mill seat is here; yet the poor women crush their corn between a stone roller and slab, in a barbarous manner upon their knees. What a lack of enterprise! Two companies of Ohio volunteers are stationed in this place.

23*d*.—This is our fifth days' march, and about one half way to Monterey. The 1st regiment keeps before, and discommodes us greatly by their train. This day I did very well. Feet getting well! Thanks to cold water!

We pitched our tents near the old Spanish town of Ceralvo, which bears the impress of an antiquated fortress, and reminds one of the dilapidated castles we read of in romances. The houses are built of gray stone, with loopholes for windows. Through the centre of the town runs a beautiful clear stream, spanned by bridges and arches. There is also a large cathedral with chimes and a towering steeple. It is said to be 166 years old. Three companies of Ohio troops are stationed in this place.

24*th*.—This sixth day's march, the easiest of all. Feet nearly

well, and bones don't ache so grievously. The beautiful scenery by the way contributed to my ease in marching.

It was not yet light when we left Ceralvo. As the rising sun cast his radiant beams upon the mountains on the left, I think I never beheld anything so beautiful and sublime. The whole chain, as far as the eye could reach, appeared like piles of burnished silver, shaded out in delightful golden tinges. I gazed upon this wonderful scenery with such exalted enjoyment, that I forgot the toils of my journey. How thankful am I, that in my heart are placed such sources of happiness. How majestic are the works of God! And what exhibitions are these of his Omnipotence! At length the mists of the morning were dispelled by the heating rays of the sun. Then in a short time what a change! Where the rich magnificence was displayed upon the mountain tops, were huge piles of rocks reaching up to the clouds. But still was left the imposing grandeur of the scene.

At a creek about six miles from this encampment, we met an express from Gen. Lane to Col. Drake of the 1st, and to the Lt. Col. of the 2d Reg. The former was ordered back; eight of his companies to be stationed at Matamoros, and two at the mouth of the Rio Grande. I was thankful that ours was permitted to go on. How my sympathies were aroused in favor of the First. Many of them received our farewell with tears streaming from their eyes.

The night of the 24th, we were uncomfortably encamped in the deserted bed of a river. There was no other water within ten miles. On a flooring of stones, our supper consisted of coffee and hard crackers filled with little black bugs. This, of course, was not very refreshing, after a hard day's march.

There is but little soil between this and Camargo worth cultivating. Scarcely a tree to be seen larger than the cherry. The soil is generally rocky and sandy, in some places having indications of iron. It produces spontaneously little else than burs, briers, thorns, and all varieties of the cactus. The prickly pear grows in enormous piles, more than six feet in height. The bank of this deserted channel is about forty feet high, composed of large gravel cemented together.

Christmas.—What a contrast between my situation here to-day and that at home one year ago. The events of last Christmas I remember well; but here a year after, far away, encamped in the val-

ley of the Sierra Madre, having marched all day with our flanks guarded by their stony peaks. I am on duty to-night, for which a fifteen miles' march is a poor preparation. Everything is filled with romance. The sky unclouded, all bespangled with brilliant stars, and the silvery moon riding forth in the midst of this beautiful scenery.

26*th*.—Having traveled sixteen miles this day, we encamped two miles beyond Marin, on the bank of a little river. We passed through the town of Ramus, which is said to be owned by Cannales, the celebrated robber. In Marin there is a fine cathedral and plaza. The houses of this town are built of stone and plaster of Paris, in which the country abounds. Notwithstanding my being up all night previous, I went ahead of the advanced guard all day. I thought I could get along better at my own gait.

27*th*.—And now we are at the Walnut Springs; the celebrated battle-ground of Monterey! This has been a painful day's march of twenty-five miles. In eight days and a half, have we performed our journey. No infantry ever performed the same distance in less time. Here we are, four miles from the city, at the camp of old Rough and Ready, who has just started with his command for Victoria.

This is a beautiful spot, with towering peaks rising majestically all around. Here are the largest, straightest trees I have seen in the country, forming a beautiful shade. We were hurried on in consequence of an order to Col. Hadden, from General Lane, stating that we were to continue our march to Saltillo, as Santa Anna was reported within two days' march of that place. Then, we have still a march of sixty-five miles before us, having passed over one hundred and fifty already. After carrying heavier burdens than troops of other states, it may be supposed we were not very sprightly; yet I feel more able to travel on the next day, than I did on the third day.

On that evening, being wearied, and having duties to perform, I did not write all that I wished. Much might have been said about the beautiful scenery that I beheld. After a hard day's march it was quite unpleasant, of course, to hunt wood, carry water, and cook half the night for the next day. But, in the above instance,

we had but little to cook, our supplies having not arrived from Monterey.

28*th*.—Whilst striking our tents this morning, general orders arrived, granting a day's respite, as the provisions could not be secured so soon. Instead of resting, quite a number set out to visit the city. It is truly astonishing how deceiving is the distance to the mountains. For three days we have been marching directly towards two mountain spurs, higher than their neighbors. After a day's journey, they seemed no nearer than they did in the morning. The city was four miles off, yet beyond was a knoll that appeared no more than a hundred yards distant. The previous evening a number of us started for this prominence that we might gaze upon Monterey, but soon found out the deception and returned to the encampment.

The more I examine and reflect about the numerous points of natural defence around the city, the greater my astonishment how it could be taken by our little army. But it is useless for me to attempt a description of scenes connected with the exciting action that was performed there. More interesting accounts than I can give have been published in numerous papers of our country.

The first place of prominence which we visited was the cathedral. This surpasses all edifices of the kind I ever saw in splendor. The images are clothed and decorated with jewels and precious metals. Some of the smaller paintings are framed in solid silver. The music from the harp and deep toned organ is truly enchanting. We visited also the fortification, the bishop's palace, and the market. The latter abounded in sugar cane, sweet potatoes and oranges of the most delicious flavor.

Before our return I met one of our townsmen. He belonged to the Louisville Legion, who were stationed near Saltillo. His health was recovered, and by his invitation we visited his quarters, the hospital. There we saw other acquaintances pale and emaciated by disease. They grasped our hands with warmth and tearful eyes. It was a touching scene, and made us all thankful for the preservation of our health. Our friend accompanied us to our camp and showed the position of the troops, and manner of attack in the great battle. We were also much interested in inspecting an extensive tannery. It was so clean and convenient. There were enormous

vats which were hollowed in the solid rock, and watered by a clear stream running through the yard.

I am conscious I have not done justice to these subjects; but this evening I am so low spirited, that I cannot write anything with ease. My companions around are reading epistles from home, while I am destitute of such consolation. These are unavailing regrets. I must cease my complaints. Our provisions are come, and they must be prepared for to-morrow's march.

29*th*.—Before day-light we were up and making ready for Saltillo. As we passed through Monterey, much attention was attracted by our numbers and healthy appearance. Having traveled fifteen miles we arrived at the little town St. Catharine, situated near the mountain in the pass. It contains about five hundred inhabitants. Near us on the same route, are encamped three companies of regulars. I suffered but little from this day's march; and felt that I could go twice the distance on the succeeding day, with as little suffering as I endured some of the first days.

The garden of General Arista near Monterey, must have a passing notice. It certainly surpasses anything of the kind that I ever beheld. It is regularly laid out with taste and skill. The earth is raised about three feet above the walks. Here are flowers of all varieties and the most fragrant. On each side of the main path (which is made of plaster, white and smooth), are two large basins with fountains rising from the centre. But more beautiful still are two pools of water, the most limpid and transparent, in which may be seen myriads of the finny tribe. Then there is a clear cool stream flowing through white cement tunnels, throughout the whole garden. The shady groves of exotic fruits, the atmosphere laden with grateful perfumes, all conspired to make it a place of enchantment. Everything appeared so novel, so beautiful, that I almost fancied it the Garden of Eden.

30*th*.—Here we are encamped in the plaza of Rinconida, after a most fatiguing march of twenty-two miles. The road was broken and rocky, and the wind blowing to the rear nearly suffocated us with dust. This town is built of mud, and is half way to Saltillo. To this the armistice extended. Rinconida signifies secure corner, and is in keeping with its name, being in the intersection of two ranges of mountains. It could be well defended by a small force.

Tending to and from the town is a beautiful grove of trees, forming a shady archway above, and is interspersed with enormous century plants, the stalks of which rise from fifteen to twenty feet.

Quite an excitement! Arrival of the Great Western, or, the heroine of Fort Brown. She has every appearance of an Amazon, being tall, muscular, and majestic in her expression. She won laurels at the bombardment from Matamoros. She issued out coffee to the men while the bombs were falling all around her.

31*st*.—On the morning of the 31st, we were mustered for two months' pay; then took up our line of march as usual. Owing to the well nigh broken-down state of our teams, we marched but twelve miles on the 31st. The road was hilly and dusty, but we arrived at our encampment in good time; the Greys being the advanced guard. This place is called the Warm Springs, from the temperature of the water. It is destitute of tree and bush, for miles around, that could be procured for fuel.

"*Camp Butler, Jan'y* 1*st*, 1847.

"Dear Sister:—

"How shall I repay you for your very kind letter? You can never know how grateful I am for its cheering effects. In fact I never had so much need of consolation before, as we have just finished a long and wearisome march from Camargo through Monterey to this place. We are encamped in the dust, which, with the wind and cold, destroys every moment of comfort. Our wood is issued out, two cords to the regiment; but when it comes to be divided among the companies, then subdivided among the messes, it is separated into small parcels indeed. No wonder, then, after marching over two hundred miles, and passing through so many comfortable places where other troops are stationed, that we should feel disappointed in being quartered in this disagreeable place. The effect is visible upon us all.

"We had been here but a few days when Col. Bowles arrived from the States loaded with letters. My dear sister, if you could have seen with what eagerness we listened for the announcement of our names, and with what avidity we tore open the seals and devoured the contents, then you would have known how dear you all are to us, and how lively is the interest we take in the associations of our beloved homes. I am unable to say how often I have read your

letter, but every time it appears new and interesting. Unto the never-to-be-forgotten friends who so kindly remember me, please give the assurance of my increased regard and warmest gratitude. Of my sincerity I promise to convince them if we are ever permitted to meet again. We are now amongst the foremost troops in the enemy's country, having pitched our tents six miles from Saltillo on the high lands of Mexico, with a girdle of mountains around us. Through these there are three principal passes. Gen. Wool's division occupies beyond the city; two companies of Kentucky cavalry at Rinconida Pass; and two companies of the same regiment at the one on our left.

"Our discipline here is very strict, as rumor of an attack is continually floating about the camp. Last night near midnight an express arrived from the city, with orders that a picket guard of thirty men should be stationed two miles from the camp on the road to the two passes, as a large body of lancers had been discovered in the neighborhood. But no further alarm has yet been given.

"We arrived here on New Year's day, just as the Louisville Legion and the 1st Ohio regiment, were returning to Monterey. We had many a welcome recognition of friends in the Legion, and many jokes on our bronzed appearance; and allusions made to brighter days, when we attended together military encampments, dinners and target shooting; little dreaming that such a meeting as this was in store.

"Yesterday several of us visited a cotton factory not far from the camp, which is owned by a Scotchman, who conducts the concern with ability. There are fifty girls employed, several of whom are from the States. The machinery was imported from New York.

"We have just received word to garrison the city, in place of General Worth's division. Yesterday they started on their way to join General Scott. The 3d regiment has already started, so I must postpone finishing till we are moved.

"18*th*.—During the interval between these dates, I have been so employed, that I have not been able to finish these notes. We have so many duties to perform, that there are few leisure moments indeed for writing. One hundred men are detailed from each of the Indiana regiments for guard; besides others to work on the fortifications. Last night our company was on patrol. We were up all night traversing the streets and alleys, and every suspicious

corner in the city. But there is so much excitement connected with these duties, that we greatly prefer them to the monotony of camp life.

"We are now pleasantly situated, having comfortable quarters and good provisions. The Greys sustain that character which they so proudly bore at home. Yesterday General Butler remarked to his aid-de-camp, while on brigade drill, that we were the finest volunteer company he had seen in the service. Our belts were perfectly white, and our arms brightly burnished, which made the contrast so perceptible.

"The city of Saltillo is situated on the side of a hill. It has narrow streets and side walks, which are roughly paved with stone. The houses are built of stone and mud bricks, whitened over on the outside with plaster. They have flat roofs. The city boasts of two cathedrals, a nunnery and four plazas. In the centre of the plazas are fountains continually playing from the centre of large basins.

"The church and plaza Santiago are truly magnificent, covering a whole square, and the front beautifully ornamented with columns, arches and statuary. In one steeple is placed a town clock, and in another a fine collection of chimes. The plaza, when viewed from the church, has an imposing appearance. The side walks around lead through arches supported by columns. There are groves of trees at regular distances, and fountains in the centre, spouting forth the sparkling liquid into the air, forming rainbows as it falls in copious showers into the basin below. But these beauties are but a scanty foretaste of the splendid magnificence that presents itself when you enter the church. I am incompetent to give a just description of its solemn grandeur. The paintings were truly beautiful. Hundreds of images were set in large cases of glass, and gilded niches richly clothed in satins and velvets, and decorated with silver, gold and precious stones. The altar in the sanctum is entirely overlaid with silver, as well as the candlesticks, censers and other appendages. The religious awe and superstitious reverence they have for these things are astonishing. As they pass the cathedral, they take off their hats. At morning, noon and night, the bells commence ringing, as if the whole town was on fire, and persons in the streets uncover their heads. Yesterday I saw a woman walking on her knees over the rough stones to church.

"A portion of my leisure time is agreeably spent with some of

my Mexican acquaintances. I have made some progress in acquiring their language. Yesterday I dined with them by invitation. The natives are moving from the city in great numbers, and every day increases the belief that the town will be attacked. About nine o'clock the other night, the whole city was thrown into an uproar by an expected attack. Great were the stir and confusion. As the long roll resounded from every guard station, the crowds of terrified citizens were seen hurrying to their homes, closing up their stores and barricading their doors. The fire was gleaming from the rough stones, as the galloping steeds were rushing to and fro. The cries, 'to your quarters, men, the enemy is upon us!' added to the commotion and tumultuous disorder.

"In a few minutes our little force was formed on the main plaza, and after an exciting appeal, were stationed at different points. There we anxiously awaited the assault, but waited in vain, and were soon disbanded, as the alarm was occasioned by the firing of the Mexican sentry upon convicts who were attempting to make their escape. It appears that Santa Anna had sent an order to the alcalde, requiring him to liberate the criminals, on condition they would join the army. This the alcalde refused to do; the prisoners finding this out, raised in rebellion, which caused our stampede.

"Yours, &c."

Camp at Agua Nueva, February 12th.

We arrived at this place, on last Saturday, to join General Taylor and Wool, who recently concentrated their forces here. It is generally believed that a movement is contemplated upon San Luis Potosi, or Zacatecas.

It is quite cold in this elevated situation, and we have suffered exceedingly, especially within a few days. Last night was the first snow storm that I saw this winter. We use pitch-pine as wood, and chop it ourselves upon the mountains, six or seven miles from the camp, by the road.

We now occupy the post of danger, and know not what is in store for us. So many reports have been in circulation, that we are almost indifferent to what we hear, no matter how startling it might appear. But if we march towards San Luis, we shall have what we have been so long craving—a fight. Recently I became sergeant, to fill the vacancy occasioned by Thomas Gwin being made

sergeant-major. Being on guard to-night, these notes are written during the intervals of my duties; having a cold, and nursing my light, which is kept flickering by the howling wind without. It is nearly eleven, and time to awaken the second relief.

13*th*.—Last night I was so cold and uncomfortably situated, that I was incapable of holding my pen, but I have commenced early this morning, hoping to finish before my companions start away. There was rain last night, and it don't seem so cold at present, but the moun ains are still covered with snow. This place is truly romantic, and presents some of the finest prospects I ever beheld. There is the extended plain, dotted with white tents, and the huge mountain piles around excite the loftiest sentiments. If the gorgeousness of the sunsets could be transferred to canvas, the painter might be called a wild enthusiast.

Dear sister, in sending you this journal, I am actuated by the expectation of a long and perilous march. It is well to dispense with all superfluous weight. Please take care of this till I return, if I should be so fortunate. I know not whether to ask you to continue writing, as it is doubtful whether your letters would be received. I shall hasten to apprize you of our next movement. Remember me to all my friends, my mother and brothers in particular. My fingers are so benumbed that I cannot write any more.

28*th*.—During last week, I have passed through so many thrilling scenes, that I am unable to describe them in regular order. Last Sunday we received orders to strike our tents and prepare to march. Before we had formed a line, and the command given, "file left," the most of us were ignorant of our place of destination. But so soon as we commenced marching towards Saltillo, there was an end of discussion.

Traveling about sixteen miles, we arrived at Buena Vista. After pitching our tents, we lay down supperless, for we had neither wood nor provisions. Scarcely had I fallen asleep, when the news was circulated that a mail had arrived. Soon after a letter was handed me from my friend Mrs. W., but, having no light, I was forced to postpone the reading till morning.

We had scarcely finished our breakfast, when the long roll was beaten, calling us all to arms, as our picket guard had just arrived

with the intelligence that the Mexican army was approaching. Having packed our wagon and formed a line, we were marched one and a-half miles towards the enemy, and stationed on a ridge just behind the narrow pass in which Major Washington's battery was placed. There we waited the approach. The Mexicans had encamped the night before at Agua Nueva, causing the Kentucky and Arkansas cavalry, who were guarding some provisions, to destroy them and retreat in the night.

We were greatly indebted to Colonel May and Captain M'Cullough, who rendered us much good service as spies. The intelligence which they brought caused us to leave the plains of Agua Nueva for a very strong and advantageous position.—Whilst we were awaiting the onset, I read Mrs. W.'s letter over and over again. It was encouraging, and afforded many topics for contemplation.

Having remained in this position more than half the day, we were ordered over to another height on the left, near the foot of the mountain, where we were, during the night, occasionally receiving a shot from the enemy's battery. (See Map, Letter D.) Toward evening, the two rifle companies, from each of the Indiana regiments, commanded by Major Gorman, who were stationed on the left, upon the side of the mountain, (see Map G,) were fired upon by an immense body of the enemy, who had also ascended the mountain. A heavy fire was kept up till dark, when all was silent, save the echoing of the enemy's trumpets. I never shall forget the peculiar melody of those sounds as we lay upon our arms, hungry, and shivering with cold. It was a prelude to the awful din of next day.

Before hostilities commenced, a flag of truce was sent by Santa Anna with dispatches to General Taylor, stating that he was here with twenty thousand men, and to save loss of blood, demanded immediate capitulation. General Taylor is said to have replied, "If you want us, come and take us!" It looked almost like madness, with an army of four thousand five hundred men, and sixteen small pieces of cannon, to compete with a force, which all our prisoners, and Santa Anna himself, agree in being twenty thousand men, and seventeen pieces of cannon—of which eight were sixteen and twenty-four pounders. What a fearful difference! Yet that small army of raw, inexperienced volunteers not only struggled against twenty thousand strong of the flower of the Mexican army, commanded by one of the ablest generals in the world, but obtained a com-

plete victory. This I hold to be one of the greatest achievements upon record.

Before I proceed further, I must confess my inability to give an accurate description of the whole action. The excitement and interest I experienced in what was passing immediately around me, occupied all my attention. I shall, therefore, for my future perusal, detail my own feelings and actions, together with what came under my own observation during the hazardous conflict.

At sunrise, on the following day, the roaring of the enemy's cannon announced the commencement of hostilities. A heavy fire was opened upon our riflemen upon the mountain, but they returned it in a handsome style. They were reinforced by a part of the 2d Illinois regiment and Kentucky cavalry, but still the odds were greatly against them. The whole mountain side, as far as the eye could reach, glittered with the enemy's bayonets and lances.

It was about nine o'clock in the morning when our regiment and a battery of three pieces, commanded by Lieut. O'Brien, marched out towards the battery which had been playing against us during the night and morning. We formed a line in front of three regiments of Mexico's oldest soldiers (see Map O). It was an awful moment to face the thousands of veterans in solid column, with their gaudy uniforms and showy banners. But we had no time for admiration; for, before our line was formed, they had fired two rounds, which we soon returned in right good earnest. I was at my post in the rank of file closers, and was urging the men to form in their proper places, when Captain Sanderson cried out, "Never mind, Frank, fire away!" which I did, with all possible haste. About this time the battery on our left (see Map, Letters M, B), opened upon us a deadly fire of grape, which raked our flank with terrible effect; still we stood front to front, and poured our fire upon the infantry, which did us but little injury, as they shot too high. But the battery on our left galled us exceedingly. It appeared as if we had purposely halted in their exact range, and the whole atmosphere resounded with the whizzing shot that came with increasing precision. Apollos Stephens was the first of the Greys to fall. He received a grape shot in the head, and fell back almost into my arms. O, how shall I describe the horror of my feelings? There lay quivering in death one of my comrades, with his eyes upturned, and the tears starting from them. It was a sad and touching scene—one that will never be effaced from my

memory. I was loading when he fell, and compressing my lips, and smothering my emotions, I stepped over him and fired. Our captain was the next to fall, exclaiming "*I've got it, boys!*" A grape shot had struck his scabbard, which saved his life. Being ready to fire again, I stepped into a vacant place in the ranks, where I continued to load and fire without noticing anything around. The only thought I remember to have had was, "What a wonder I did not receive Captain Sanderson's shot, as I was next to him on the same line! so the ball must have passed me before it struck him." All was hurry and excitement, each working hard and doing his best. Occasionally a cannon-ball would whistle over our heads, or strike the ground near us, throwing the rock and dirt in all directions.

We had fired about twenty-one rounds, when I heard some one say, "They are all retreating!" and turning, I saw that the right wing had gone, and the left starting. But several who had not heard Colonel Bowles' order to retreat, cried out, "Halt, men! for God's sake, stop!" At this, many of us hesitated; but the retreat was general, and the enemy fast advancing upon us, led on by a large force of lancers. At length, Lieutenant Cayre, then in command, remarked, "It's no use, boys, to stay here alone; let *us* retreat!" which we did, with the balls raining around us, and the lancers at our heels. We rallied, by order, on the brow of the ridge from which we started in the morning, but were told to fall back upon the ridge on which we were first formed on the morning of the 22d. Here many of us met the Mississippi regiment of riflemen, who had just arrived from their quarters in town.

The more I reflect upon our position in the opening of the conflict, the more I am at a loss to understand the policy of sending the 2d regiment against such an overpowering force. We were three-quarters of a mile from any assistance, except that of the gallant O'Brien, who with his three little pieces did such great execution.

Our field officers all deny giving the word retreat, and General Lane, they say, intended to charge. Had he given the word, the charge would have been made; but how dreadful would have been the slaughter of our troops. It is unprecedented in the annals of warfare, for eight companies to rush against a disciplined force of three thousand infantry supported by twelve hundred lancers. Had we remained fifteen minutes longer, it is thought not one half of us

would have survived. Their battery was fast getting our exact range, and it is astonishing that so many of us escaped.*

My object in thus pausing in my description, is to show the position of our field officers, and why the 2d Indiana regiment scattered themselves into other regiments. Here, one instance will be related showing the qualification of Colonel Bowles to command. On the night of the 22d we were surprised by a body of horsemen, supposed to be lancers endeavoring to outflank us. This was pointed out to the Colonel, who called us to attention, and attempted to form us in a line of battle before the enemy. But, in his ignorance of tactics, he got us with the "left in front," and while we were maneuvering to get right, we might have been cut to pieces. Fortunately, however, the alarm was caused by some of our own cavalry, who were returning from watering their horses.

At this display of incapacity in the hour of danger, great murmuring arose amongst the officers, and the men were all unwilling to trust their honor and lives in his hands. A committee was sent to General Lane, requesting him to be with us on the following day, which he promised faithfully to do. Now in these remarks, I do not wish to express any disrespect to Colonel Bowles, farther than as a military commander. I believe him to be intelligent, courteous and humane, and judging of actions during the engagement, I have no reason to doubt his or Colonel Haddon's bravery. But who would wonder at our want of confidence in these officers, after be-

* In justice to General Lane who, being ordered by General Wool to move forward and meet the enemy that were advancing in strong force, selected this point for their reception—I will state, that since I have surveyed, with more leisure and coolness, our position, I am convinced that a more judicious spot could not have been chosen. It was the only place where our small force could present so large a front as the enemy, who, with their overpowering numbers upon almost any other ground, might have surrounded and destroyed us. To show the probability of success, had the intended charge been made, I will here quote from a conversation after the battle. General Wool remarked to Colonel Bowles, in the presence of General Lane, Colonel Curtis, 3d Ohio regiment, and Major Washington, Light Artillery, that if he had withheld his order, "Cease firing, and retreat," and had carried out the intention of General Lane, to advance, his regiment would have executed one of the most brilliant things ever done on any field of battle; "for," said he, "Santa Anna, in his own official report, remarks, 'that he had already passed an order for his forces to retreat, when the enemy, after a most determined resistance, was observed to give way in great confusion.'"

holding their ridiculous blunders while on drill? Who would blame the men for preferring other commanders, when the enemy commenced crowding upon us? One-third of us joined other regiments, and the remainder rallied under Lieutenant Colonel Haddon, forming a distinct front as a regiment, and fought with firmness alongside the Mississippians and 3d Indianians.

After many fruitless exertions to rally his men, Colonel Bowles ordered those who were near him to join the Mississippians, at the same time falling in himself. We marched along the ridge to meet a large body of lancers supported by infantry. We soon opened our fire upon them, and that, too, in a manner which forced them to retreat, and pursuing, we halted at intervals, and continued our leaden hail. Having followed them across two deep ravines, they were reinforced, and came rushing down upon us like a tremendous avalanche, pouring out upon us their incessant shot. We fell back across the two hollows, occasionally halting to fire upon our pursuers.

While in the second ravine, the sun shining with burning heat, famishing for want of water, and almost overcome with exertions, I leaned against a rocky precipice, and there made up my mind to die. Sad and hopeless were my thoughts, when, raising my head, I beheld the Mexican line firing down upon us. At this I was involuntarily aroused, and recollecting an expression in Mrs. W.'s letter, "If you should die, it would kill your mother," I made an effort for those I loved and gained the summit. But oh! God! what a merciful preservation! The balls rained around, scattering death and destruction on every side. It appeared like the bed under a shot tower, so thick and fast did the balls hail about us. A man just before me was shot down, and a brave lieutenant, who so kindly made room for me in his company, fell wounded behind me, exclaiming, "Give me water! give me a handkerchief!" I gazed upon his supplicating countenance, but had nothing to relieve him. Rendered reckless by the sight we had just witnessed, we rallied again upon the top of the hill, and with the 2d Indiana under Lieutenant Haddon, opened a terrible fire upon our blood-thirsty enemies. They soon retreated in the utmost disorder.

Having fled beyond our fire, a detail was sent to explore the ravine for our wounded. While descending, what a shocking scene presented itself! The barbarians were cruelly butchering our wounded, and stripping them of their clothes. But our unerring rifles soon stopped these atrocious murders. Our success was but

poor compensation for the blood of twenty brave comrades. The poor lieutenant was left naked with his throat cut from ear to ear.

About this time the city of Saltillo was attacked by two thousand lancers, from Palamus Pass, commanded by General Minon, but being unable to face Major Webster's well-directed battery from the redoubt fort, were driven back, after endeavoring to join the main army by passing along the foot of the mountain. Simultaneous with this engagement, a charge was made by a large body of lancers upon our baggage and provision train, at the Ranch (see Map, Letter J) Buena Vista, and were met by several companies of Kentucky and Arkansas cavalry, who were unable to withstand the shock, and were forced to fall back. Then the extended line of lancers came rushing down with their weapons poised ready to murder and rob our wounded, and sack our wagons. But they were checked by the appalling fire from the Indiana rifle battalion, who were ordered from the mountain with others who had rallied there. (See Map, Letter K.) If the latter could be blamed for retreating thither, they more than balanced it by their coolness and heroic defence in this instance. So firmly and furiously did they resist the Mexicans, that the plundering wretches gladly made their escape, leaving the plain strewed with their dead and dying. They were now pursued by Colonel May's squadron of dragoons, who, with two pieces of Captain Bragg's battery, had just come up. They were driven along the foot of the mountain into a gorge, where they joined a force that the Mississippians, reinforced by the two Indiana regiments and a twelve-pound howitzer, had been firing upon with great execution. There we had them in a dreadful dilemma, Colonel May (see Letter U), and the two pieces on the left pouring forth a destructive fire as they closed in. Below, on their right, was stationed a battery of three pieces, commanded by Captain Sherman, (see Letter Z,) emitting without mercy the messengers of death. Still further to the right was our position, (see Letter H,) and with our little cannon was opening their ranks at every fire. At this interesting crisis, just as we were about to obtain a brilliant victory over a force of more than five thousand strong, we were ordered to cease hostilities, as a flag of truce had arrived. There was an immediate cessation on *our* part, which the enemy faithlessly took advantage of, by passing out of the gorge, but not without suffering greatly from the fire which opened upon them, when their object was discovered.

The greatest portion of the afternoon was spent with these events. The enemy, now making another desperate effort, came charging down upon us in all their splendor. We at once formed a V. (See Letter H.) The 3d Indiana on the right, the Mississippians and 2d Indiana forming the angle. As we stood awaiting their approach, Colonel Davis cried out, "Hold your fire, men, until they get close, and then give it to them!" I never shall forget the imposing appearance of the Mexicans as they bore down upon us with their immense columns, glittering lances, and parti-colored banners. There was one company mounted upon white horses, and wearing brass mounted caps, with red plumes. At first they started off in a trot, and as they accelerated into a graceful gallop, with lines accurately dressed, and lances poised for action, within twenty paces of us, General Lane gave the word—"*Now give it to them!*" Here I shall fail in description. What language could I use to convey a vivid impression of the din and crashing thunder of this terrible collision? How awful was the report and the destruction of our deadly fire. The enemy at first slackened, then halted and wavered; then turning toward their battery, on the ridge, they fled, terrified and panic-stricken.

It was, indeed, a glorious achievement. Whole platoons appeared to droop and fall before our unerring shot. It seemed as if every man felt that he was an American soldier, and that he was individually responsible for the performance of that hour. And as the victors pursued the retreating foe, they rent the air with their shouts of triumph, throwing up their caps, and giving every demonstration of the highest delight.

I now felt for the first time like exclaiming, "There is something glorious in the pomp and circumstance of war." I almost thought that I could not be killed, and I felt secure when I reflected about the bloody ravine, and my miraculous escape. General Lane here rode by, exclaiming, "*We'll whip them yet!*" He forgot entirely his wounded arm, and rode about the field cheering and encouraging the men. It was truly a happy time! Our little cannon had played into them so effectually, and it was defended so nobly! In a few minutes we were again facing the foe upon the ridge, near the place where we were stationed in the morning, (see Letter S.) The enemy had planted there a heavy battery, (see Letters M and B,) and as we ascended the brow of the hill, we were warmly received by an incessant fire, both from the battery and the Mexi-

can reserve of six thousand that were pursuing the Illinoisians and Kentuckians, who had *heroically* attacked this overpowering force. This was the unfortunate charge in which fell the gallant Hardin, McKee, and Clay;—a trio of mind, heart and courage, ever to be lamented. (See Letter P.)

We soon, however, nothing daunted, paid them back with interest, and again the air was eloquent with our victorious cheers. We there fell back for protection, under the brow of the hill, and calmly listened to the whizzing shot from the enemy's battery striking the ground in front and rear, scattering the stone in every direction. Thus was spent the remaining portion of the day. Occasionally we would be called to attention, and marched to the brow of the hill, when we suspected some demonstration upon our cannon, which was used in silencing the enemy's battery. About sundown, the thundering of artillery ceased, and the conflict of the day was over.

The Mississippians having received orders to repair to their quarters in town, myself and Lieutenant Kunkle, (who so proudly bore our banner in the thickest fight,) accompanied them as far as the hacienda. Our noble banner was executed by the skill and patriotism of the New Albany ladies.

Such a night as I spent at the hacienda, God grant that I may never spend again! What piles of wounded and dying that lay groaning around! After wandering about among the wagons which were formed into a hollow square, I came across one of my messmates. Warmly grasping each other's hands, we mutually inquired for our comrades. Then came the mournful tidings of the death of Francis Baily, Warren Robinson, and Charles Goff, three of my warmest friends, and brightest ornaments of our company. What a shock was this!—two of our beloved messmates, by whom, side by side, we had laid together for so many long months on the soldier's couch, and with whom we had so often joked, while around our simple meals! But no more shall we mingle together in such uninterrupted harmony! I sought among the wagons for my blanket, but it was not there. I desired no food, notwithstanding I had eaten but a few pieces of hard crackers since the morning before. I was now becoming conscious of my excessive weariness. Loss of sleep, violent exertion, and the rain, which drenched us several times during the day, caused my bones to ache in every joint. Weary and faint, I resorted to the roof of one of the houses, hoping

to get a little rest, but in this I was disappointed. I had scarcely begun to occupy a portion of a blanket kindly offered me by one of my friends, when we were alarmed by an unexpected charge from the lancers. Great were the excitement and hurry on the house tops. Soon every one was ready and waiting for the onset. Thus the night was spent in continual alarms, anxiety and suspense. We were ordered to lie upon our arms, and five times during the night were we aroused for the expected assault from the lancers, whose watch fires gleamed ominously from the mountains around. The sun had hardly arisen upon the bloody field, when I gladly arose to seek a fire, as my limbs were benumbed with cold. While seated on a stone near a fire, I was brooding over my fate, and that of our little army.

Gloomy, indeed, were my thoughts when my eye caught an open letter lying upon the ground. Picking it up, I read carelessly until I started at beholding my own name. Soon I found that the letter was written from my beloved home, by one of my female friends to my departed associate, Charles Goff. Never did I before so fully appreciate the value of friends, or a quiet home, away from the tumult of war. "A—— says she loves her friends." How did these sweet words sink into my heart, and what would I not have given to have realized their import! But what a contrast between my situation and that of my friends! The dead and the dying, with mangled and bloody features, staring at me, and a day of deadly strife before us! I felt that my own destiny would soon be sealed, and resolved to hold out to the last.

If ever permitted to return home and mingle with valued friends, and enjoy the blessings of peace, doubtless many of the horrors will be effaced from my memory. But never shall I forget the terrible night that I passed at the hacienda of Buena Vista.

Having partaken of some refreshment, many of us proceeded to the field to rejoin our regiment. While wiping out our muskets and renewing our flints by the way, we were passed by six men, bearing the body of a wounded companion. Looking over their shoulders, I recognized my old friend, Sergeant Combs, of the 3d Indiana regiment. The poor fellow had been shot in the leg, and had lain out in the field all night. In the morning his naked body was found amidst a plat of prickly pears, with his flesh penetrated by the long needles. He has since died.

Upon our arrival we heard of the retreat of the Mexican army,

and parties were sent out in all directions for the killed and wounded. Another and myself obtained leave to seek for the body of Warren Robinson. The last account we had of him he was in a ravine, completely exhausted, and some one passing, remarked, "Warren, don't stop here; you'll surely be killed!" He answered, "I can't help it; I can go no further; and if I never see you again, you will know where to find me." This place was described to us, and we found him accordingly. He was pierced to the heart by a ball, and robbed of his shoes and stockings, and the contents of his pockets.

After gazing upon the placid countenance of young Warren, and reflecting on his blasted hopes of the future, we raised him up, and with assistance, bore his bleeding body to the summit of the ridge. Having secured a wagon, a party of us went in search of others belonging to our regiment. At length we found the horridly disfigured bodies of Apollos Stephens and Francis Baily. They were stripped of their clothing, and near the place where they had fallen in the morning. At first the icy coldness of their naked bodies sent a thrill of horror at every touch throughout my whole frame: but my firmness of nerve increased a little as we progressed in filling up the wagon with our fallen associates. How my blood chills when I reflect on those dead soldiers stiffened in frightful attitudes, that were heaped upon one another so promiscuously! On which side soever we turned our eyes, could be seen friends and foes terribly mangled, and lingering in torture. Many of the Mexicans would call out "Agua, agua!" and gulping it down, they would appear resigned to die. And thus the day was spent in wandering over the bloody field, and burying the dead. The dead of each regiment were laid together. Our boys were placed side by side—Robinson sharing the blanket of his college mate Capt. Kinder. After preserving a lock of each one's hair, as a memento for their friends, we fixed a cross made with staves, with their names cut thereon, and raised over them a pile of stones. Then we fired three salutes, and with a heavy heart returned to our camp. But wherever we went, the dead appeared to follow us, and the most solemn silence reigned around. On one side lay fifty of our killed, all stripped; and everywhere could be seen the effect of the raging conflict. After a cheerless supper, we performed the last duties of humanity to our worthy messmate Charles Goff. It appears that during the retreat he received a lance wound in the left elbow, and repaired to a stream below the rancho to quench

his thirst and bathe his wound when he was attacked by five lancers. Seeing him unarmed, they pursued him at full speed. After chasing him some distance, they overtook him, and Charles, finding it impossible to save himself, faced the foe and received the lance in the breast, before assistance could arrive, and died with an expression of calm resignation lingering upon his countenance. He was a good soldier, taking pride in the performance of all his duties. As a Christian he was invulnerable to the temptations of camp. The last conversation I had with him was just before we marched out to the battle. I inquired if he had expressed to any one his wishes in case he should fall. He replied "No!" with great seriousness. "Hadn't you better?" said I. "Yes, and now is the time," he answered. "I wish you to collect my papers and things, and take them home to my friends; you know who I mean." I asked if he just meant those things that might be preserved as mementos. Here we were called to attention, and he replied by nodding his head. Then I heard his rallying voice after the retreat, which was the last I saw of him until he was cold in death. O how deeply do we feel his loss! Few, indeed, were like him! We buried him by moonlight on a grassy ridge near the spot where he fell. Several officers of the brigade and regiment were present.

The next day our scouts brought word that Santa Anna was still at Agua Nueva, and perhaps would renew the combat. We were ordered to strike our tents and repair again to the battle-field, where we remained suffering almost every inconvenience. In my mess there was not a single blanket, and many of us had lost our knapsacks with our clothing. So we were forced to sleep upon a stony mattress with our tents as coverlids. Even such rest as these could afford was uncertain. Our dreams were feverish with anxiety, and every hour we expected the long roll, and our arms were continually near us. The long roll! oh how terrible the sound! fraught with danger and death! The soldier alone can appreciate its import! A night or two before, we heard its sounds with all its horrors.

Others with myself were conversing over a few coals when General Lane came up, and ordered Colonel Bowles to have the long roll beaten as an express had just arrived, stating that our picket guard had been fired upon. This was a fine opportunity to witness its startling effect, and waking up my mess we looked down the ravine, where so many were reposing their weary bones. The moon looked down upon us in all her silvery brightness, save in the

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gloomy shadow of mighty rocks, which were piled up stratum upon stratum. Death-like stillness pervaded the scene, but it was like the silence that preludes the mighty crash of the avalanche ; for now the rolling of a hundred drums spreads from line to line. In an instant the white coverings are flying in the air, and the whole army starting to their feet with every variety of expression visible upon their excited countenances.

After shivering in the cold for an hour, we were permitted to lie down again upon our arms. Thus the time was spent in continual alarms and rumors of assault, which was worse than a dozen battles. We were all anxious to meet the enemy again, to be revenged for their cruelty to our wounded brethren, and felt that we could fight more effectually, as we were hardened into indifference by the past, in beholding our falling comrades. And further, we had a reinforcement of General Marshall with three eighteen pounders. At length intelligence came that the Mexican army had taken up their line of march to San Luis Potosi ; when we were ordered immediately to make preparations for our old encampment.

It was a melancholy march, as the road all the way for sixteen miles was strewed with the Mexican dead. On a single spot I counted thirteen bodies; and at times the scent from the field was almost insupportable. After an exciting march, we pitched our tents near the spot which we left a week before; and part of the time since the enemy had occupied, whose fires were not extinct on our return.

March 14*th.*—We received orders last Wednesday to remove back to Buena Vista, as the water was so bad, and the wind and dust so disagreeable, that even our horses were affected, causing them to die off in great numbers. I was on guard the day before, and was not relieved till the next evening. To remain a whole day in the hot sun without shelter, and remain up all night in the cold wind, is a poor preparation for a hard march. The guard went in advance, and upon our arrival, were posted around the camp, which is situated on a ridge, sloping from the mountain. There we remained until the tents were pitched, and a new guard mounted.

We have not yet forgotten the battle. Low spirits, gloom and regret are everywhere manifest. There are but few who have not to mourn the loss of friends and relations. Our wounded are all

doing well, save Granville Jackson, the inflammation of whose hand has brought on a severe fever; and Alfred Goodwin, who, though badly wounded, may eventually be able to walk.

Much controversy is going with regard to the retreat of the 2d regiment; but as it can easily be proved that Colonel Bowles gave the order, the matter will soon be favorably understood. But the subject gives us great trouble. If our reputation must suffer, it is, indeed, very discouraging.

General Taylor, the adored of the army and the hero of many battles, has removed with Colonel May's squadron of dragoons, Bragg's battery of light artillery, and the Mississippi regiment, to Walnut Springs, near Monterey. We are still under the command of General Wool, who, although a brave and prudent officer, and a good soldier, falls below "Old Rough" in gaining the affection of the men.

There are many things I should like to speak of, especially incidents and personalities connected with the battle, but am now too low spirited to relate them. We are so inconveniently situated, the wind and dust so disagreeable, and at times so concerned for our reputation, that often I become almost hopeless, and hardly care what becomes of me. The Indiana troops have truly been unfortunate, the 2d regiment especially. From our first entering the service, we were organized in a way contrary to our wishes, and officers selected for us, wholly unqualified for their stations, and even below mediocrity in point of talent, which rendered them unable to draw the attention of commanding officers to their regiment. Thus the greater portion of our time was spent in obscurity, wading the lagoons of Belknap—since which time we are nothing indebted to our regimental officers for our preferments. General Lane has made the 2d regiment what it is, and does honor to the position which he occupies. But I will cease this strain, as I promised to complain as little as possible.

April 1st.—We are now comfortably situated, and have less cause of complaint than at any other time during the service. There are two tents pitched together for our mess of eight, who live together in the greatest harmony. Our floor is carpeted with grass, and we have blankets and provisions in abundance. But still we look with much solicitude to the time when we shall meet our beloved friends at home. What a blank is caused by the

absence of some of the refinements of society, and to be so long absent from those we love, with but little to occupy their places!—I have learned much in the tented field; I have learned how few are the real wants of man; I have learned to abstain from luxuries and to suffer privation; I have learned how important is good female society for the refinement of manners and the elevation of morals.

All is quiet again, and the excitement attending the expectation of another attack, has died away. Until recently, the guard duty has been very heavy, and the troops in constant anxiety, caused by the rumors in circulation.—Yesterday the whole division passed in grand review before General Wool and staff. It was truly a splendid sight. Seven regiments of infantry, accurately dressed upon the same line; two squadrons of dragoons, and four batteries of flying artillery. The gaudy uniforms of the general and staff added to the imposing grandeur of the parade. The camp is generally in good health, and our wounded doing well. The loss of Goff and Robinson is a severe stroke to the mess. I assure you we miss them greatly, especially at night, when we see their vacant places upon the ground.

May 15*th*.—During the last two weeks much excitement has prevailed with regard to the court of investigation, concerning the conduct of Brigadier-General Lane and Colonel Bowles. General Lane called for an examination on his own part, and was acquitted with the highest praise. Colonel Bowles, by request, followed his example, and the charge of incapacity for performing the duties of his office, and ignorance of company and battalion drill, were fully substantiated, as well as the word of giving the order—"Cease firing, and retreat!" This decision, approved by Generals Taylor and Wool, at once sets at rest all doubts as to the propriety of our retreat, and no blame can now be attached to the 2d regiment for that unfortunate event.

Yesterday evening we received the joyful orders to take up our line of march for the mouth of the Rio Grande, to start on the 24th. The 2d Kentuckians started yesterday; the Ohioans will leave on the 18th; and the Illinoisians on the 30th.—We have just received a request from the citizens of New Albany to bring home the four bodies of our fallen comrades. We had already canvassed the matter, and given it up as impossible; but now it must be done,

and preparations are being made for their transportation. General Lane, with his characteristic nobleness of heart, lends a helping hand. The Mexicans are inferior mechanics, and material is scarce; and we shall have to use tin instead of lead for coffins, as the latter is not to be had.

The decision of the Court of Inquiry encouraged and animated us all; and the effect was quite obvious throughout the whole camp. Last night a number of us were convened around the fire, and were all recalling incidents connected with the battle. Many amusing anecdotes were related, two of which I shall record, as examples of great coolness in the heat of battle.

During the engagement of the rifle battalion on the mountain, a deer sprang up in the ravine, between the two fires; a backwoodsman observing it, cried out, "Look at that deer!" at the same time diverting his aim from the enemy in front, instantly fired, and brought the animal to the ground. Another happened under my own observation. When Captain Sanderson fell, badly shocked by a grape shot striking his scabbard, a man just before him, who was squatted down examining his flint, seeing the ball fall near, picked it up, and turning to the captain, who was gasping for breath, threw it towards him, carelessly remarking, "There it is, Cap.!"

A ludicrous story was told of a party composed of different regiments, in an eating-house of Saltillo, after the battle. They were drinking, and relating their wonderful exploits. One in particular was eloquent upon the daring bravery of his captain. At this crisis, a fellow who had been unnoticed before in their merriment, advanced from his corner, and enthusiastically insisted that the captain spoken of was a brave man, for he saw him charge unarmed upon a presented pistol. The stranger was invited to drink, then urged to relate the circumstance, and, after smacking his lips with great satisfaction, he commenced. "During the fight I retreated to town, and hid in an old bake oven that stood on the hill, as you enter the city. Well, I hadn't been there long, before I spied your captain making for it at full speed. I drew my revolver, and when he came, cried out to him, 'Don't you come here, or I'll blow your brains out!' *But he rushed right in.*"

An amusing incident came off the other day, at the mounting of the guard. A lieutenant, rather too fond of the "Critter," with a seedy suit that had evidently not been worn out with brushing, was rejected, and charged by our worthy inspector-general not to pre-

sent himself there again. So the next day *another* was detailed, not much better attired. When the inspector perceived him, he rode up, and severely remarked, "Didn't I tell you not to come back here?" He respectfully rejoined: "A slight mistake, colonel, there is one grease spot less on this hat!"

"*Camp near Reynosa, June 4th.*

"According to general orders, we broke up our encampment at Buena Vista on the 24th of May, and after a march of ten successive days, over three hundred miles, we arrived at this place. From this we will take steamboats to the mouth of the Rio Grande, thence by vessels to New Orleans, where we will be discharged, and permitted to return to the endearments of home. It rained during our last day's march, and has continued to do so ever since, at intervals.

"Yesterday several of us visited Reynosa, but saw nothing interesting, with the exception of the funeral of a little girl five years of age. We were first attracted to the house by music from the drum, clarionet and violin. When we arrived, we found the child placed upright in the coffin, and tricked out with finery. On the head was a kind of a crown of gilt paper; in one hand the figure of a saint, and in the other a piece of black wax. After many of the family and friends had assembled, they formed a ring before the door, and commenced dancing and waltzing in the most unfeeling manner, until the corpse was conveyed to the church. They bear the death of children with great philosophy, deeming it no source of lamentation. The more extensive my acquaintance with this people, the greater my pride and satisfaction in being an American. The beauty and ingenuousness of their women, the mind and energy of their men, are so far below those of ours, that we cannot make a comparison. They plough their fields with a straight stick running slanting into the ground; never did I see them make a pound of butter, although they obtain vast quantities of milk; and they justify their laborious way of crushing corn by saying 'it makes it much finer than mills.'"

On the 3d of July, we landed at New Albany, after an absence of a year. Multitudes of friends and acquaintances stood upon the shore to await our arrival. The cannon roared to welcome us, and a flowery arch spanned the street in all its beauty, to cheer us as we entered the city. On the fifth, we transported to the solemn

grave, the remains of our fellow soldiers. Great was the concourse which followed in procession, to witness the mournful ceremony. A noble monument will mark the resting-place of those who fell in battle.

Reader, I will now come to a conclusion. This journal was written for my own reference and amusement, but I have made some verbal alterations for your accommodation. Had I more thoroughly revised the style and arrangement in my manuscript, doubtless fewer errors would have existed; but it may go forth with its imperfections, for I have neither time nor inclination to put on a higher polish.

Other companies than the *Greys*, and other regiments than the *Second*, could not expect a description of all their glorious deeds from one whose humble position limited his survey and sources of extensive information. If I have erred in statements, it was of the *head*, and not of the *heart*. With a clear conscience I have written what I have written. Brilliant actions, no doubt, were performed at Buena Vista that will never shine upon canvas, nor glow in the poet's song, nor blaze upon the page of history.

THE END.

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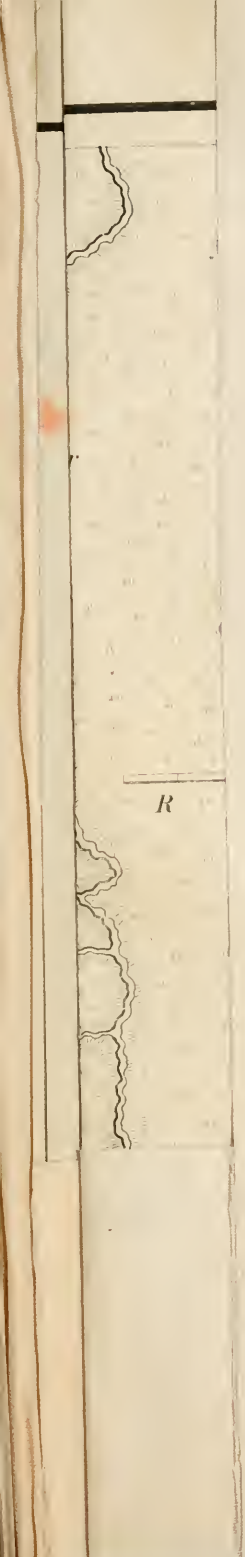

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Gen[l] Wool and Staff
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W Braggs Battery
Z Shermans Battery
Y M[c]Rees Battery

M B Mexican Battery of 24 Pounders
M I Mexican Infantry
L Mexican Lancers

D 1st position of the 2nd Indiana
O 2nd do do do do
X 1st. do do 3rd Indiana
R 1st do do 2nd Kentucky 2d Fdrc
F 2nd do do 2nd Illinois
G Indiana and Kentucky Rifleman on the Mountain
J Kentucky and Arkansas horse
L Mexican Lancers
K 2nd position of Indiana Rifleman
I 1st. do Col Mays Squadron dragoons
I' 2nd do do do do do
H 2nd and 3rd Indiana and Mississippa Regiments
S do do do do do
P Famous charge of Vdz Harden McKee and Clay
T Buena Vista Rancho used as a Hospital during battle
C Spring
N Road to San Luis Potosi
d r Deep and Rugged Ravines
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